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[No. 41]

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

BY CHARLES F. DOLE.

If you want to get the great common facts of science, you have to throw out every thing in which scientific men differ, and simply to see where all are agreed, and you call this common ground *essential truth.* Just so, when we take a number of Christian men of all sorts, customs, and creeds, and throw out every thing in which they differ, and keep the things where they are all one, we find the essential creed which we seek. We can easily agree now upon the great and simple elements of our Common Christianity.

We assume together to begin with the belief in God and the hope of immortality. We all believe in the great Power from whom our lives spring, the source of goodness, the abiding truth and love, whom we call by the sacred name of Our Father. We all hope for the eternal life of joy, of growth, of service, and love. Our next common point, then, is the Bible. We all alike go to the Bible, as the highest religious inspiration, — go to it for sympathy and comfort, for lessons of truth and righteousness, for examples of holy living; and we all alike love it as the best book which we know in the world. For the fact is, whatever our varying theories about it, we all get good out of the Bible, get help, and stirring towards God, as we get good out of no other book.

My next point is with regard to Jesus Christ. We agree about Christ more than the widest of us differ. We are one in taking his life as our model, in loving his words, and in seeing in him a revelation of God. We agree, — the widest of us agree, — that if he, or such as he,

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could come again into the world, we should hail him and love him. We agree in our allegiance to what he said was his work, — the lifting all men into a kingdom of righteousness. In short, all differences of opinion about him are metaphysical abstractions, compared to the common fact, that all Christians want to have their lives like the ideal which they have of this Christ.

Our next point of agreement is the Christian life itself. We believe that there is such a thing as a life of love. We use different language to express it; but what of that? If one and another only succeed in helping bad men to be good; proud, conceited men to be humble; selfish men to give up their selfish wills; dishonest men to make restitution; if they only succeed in making men see the need and the goodness of living as Jesus lived!

Another common point is the belief in retribution. Some people think they know a deal more of heaven and hell than they know of this earth, and that God has clearly revealed all about the details of these things. No matter for that. The common fact lies open before us. We all agree that a man can never do wrong and not, somewhere or some time, suffer the just and inevitable penalty; and no one who thinks it safe to do wrong has caught the idea of a Christian.

Again, we agree that we all need God's help to be Christians. Some prefer to say we need *special* help, and some think we need help constantly, that it is through the fact of God's help that we live at all. What difference does it make, when we all recognize Him as the giver of every good gift, and the inspirer of every thought, to whom we come as naturally as children?

One further point. It is the idea of forgiveness. The peculiarity of Christianity has always been that it gave every man a new chance. It came to the man who had wandered and sinned, and it said, "Turn about and do

right, and God's love and man's love shall attend you again. Break off the bad life, and God will give you a new." We say this in ten thousand pulpits to-day. People have various theories how this can be; and some of us simply say, that such is the wonderful nature of love, that it was such before Christ, and that he only showed it more plainly. All speak of the fact, and all carry it back to the goodness of God.

Now we find every one of these things in every man whose life makes any just claim to be Christian. But as soon as we go beyond these simple articles, we find hopeless difference in beliefs and in customs. We therefore rightly infer that these things are essential. Does any one still ask, "Are you quite sure these simple elements are enough?" We know that they are enough, just as we know that bread and meat and fruit are enough for our food, that these things are essential, and that pastry, nuts, and wines are at best only luxuries.

Just so we know that a man cannot believe in God in any real sense, however different from our own and under any different name; or hope for immortality, whatever his ground for it; or truly care for the Bible and love it; or look up to Jesus, if only as much as a wonderful teacher; or strive for a Christ-like life; or fear, for whatever reason, to do a wrong thing; or ever, feeling his needs, pray for God's help; or catch the thought of a new life through forgiveness, — I say no man can have a gleam of one of these thoughts, and not bring forth some true fruit of the Spirit in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, faith, and temperance. And the more you consider, the more you will find that all the other articles of our different creeds are only other forms — and some of them possibly dead and confusing forms — to express these simple Christian principles.

For you see these common things all confessedly help

towards Christian character, but the other things on which we differ cannot one of them be shown to be a kind of help on which character really depends; and, fairly faced, I cannot see how any one can get around this plain fact, or, indeed, why he should want to get around it.

I seem, therefore, to hear a deeper call to our conflicting Christian sects and parties than any human battle-cry. Already it sounds in our ears in the moments when we try to listen to God; and, when this call comes, all other sounds of discord and variance are hushed into silence. It seems to say to us something like this: You believe in a God of law and love: *live*, then, as though you believed. You hold the mighty hope of eternal life: take the joy of that hope and live in its light. You believe in the life of Jesus, and you want such a life for yourself: *strive*, then, to enter the kingdom of goodness, whose glory he saw. You believe that every sin hurts your own soul and harms your fellows: oh! then, turn from all that is evil, and take God's present help to live this new life!

These words come home to our consciences. They mean reality. They mean earnestness. They mean charity; and, thank God, they mean harmony and growing love for each other.

American Unitarian Association, 25 *Beacon Street*, Boston.

[No. 42]

THE

IMMORTAL HOPE.

BY

REV. JOHN W. CHADWICK.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE IMMORTAL HOPE.

These are the days when out of seeming death new life is springing everywhere, the days of "spring's delicious trouble in the ground," when the dull sods are putting forth the green of grass, the blue of violets. How wonderful it is, this punctual transformation! It is so wonderful, that nothing which it is possible for us to think can be too wonderful for our belief.

Life out of seeming death: this miracle of the springtime resurrection has touched the heart of man with a mysterious hope and prophecy. This hope and prophecy have attained concrete expression in the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. To-day, in thousands of churches, millions of worshippers are celebrating their delight and satisfaction in this doctrine, with music and with flowers. The voices of little children are singing it in gladsome songs. Are we cut off entirely from this Easter joy? Indeed we are not. The dogma of the churches may not be for us, but the springtime is for us, and the wind-flower and hepatica are fragrant for our hearts with an immortal hope.

> "Parcel and part of all,
> We keep the festival."

But some will say, Not so; the hope of immortality is not only irrational, it is an egotistic, selfish, and demoralizing hope. There are voices that take on this dreary tone which are as earnest and impressive as any voices of

our time. We ought to heed them well. The opinions that we cannot hold when we have heard the worst that any earnest, thoughtful man can say in their disproof, we should not care to cherish.

But it is one thing to approve the earnestness and sincerity of those who tell us that the hope of immortality is an egotistic, selfish, and demoralizing hope, and it is quite another thing to approve of their opinions. Myself approving of the former, I have for the latter — I will not say *only* the flattest disapproval, but the flattest disapproval in the main. That the hope of immortality can be held in such a temper and spirit that it will be selfish and demoralizing, this I do not deny. It is this fact that gives a certain color of truth to the indictment of those who insist that it is essentially ignoble. But there are many hopes that are not essentially ignoble, that can be entertained in an ignoble way; and of all these the hope of immortality is the most serious and commanding. It can be held unworthily, but in its essence it is no unworthy hope; nay, rather, of all hopes it is the most worthy, the most beautiful, the most tender, the most earnest and beneficent that has ever harbored in the heart of man.

There are those to whom this phrase, "the hope of immortality," has an unpleasant sound. For these a hope is not enough. "We are saved by hope," said the apostle. Nay, not by hope, but by assurance, certainty, say the dogmatic. And it is a notable fact that the feeling of assurance, of certainty, has its representatives in the most opposite quarters. The Christian conservative bases his assurance upon the resurrection of Jesus; and the Spiritualist, who has broken almost completely with the Christian tradition, and in most particulars allied himself with natural and critical science, bases his assurance on certain physical and psychological phenomena, before which our men of science stand as yet wholly baffled, and too fre-

quently contemptuous of that which may possess for them undreamed-of possibilities. But the attitude of hope, not that of complete assurance, not that of absolute certainty, was the first attitude of the Christian world, of that ideal church to which Christendom has looked back regretfully, the reproduction of which has been the aim of many a great reform. "That ye through patience might have hope;" "That ye may abound in hope;" "Blessed be God who hath begotten us to a lively hope;" "Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself:" such sentences as these indicate the New Testament spirit. It does not follow that it is the highest and the best. But it does follow that those who look to the early Christian spirit as the standard of the highest and the best, to be consistent, should allow the sentiment of hope, not that of complete assurance, to be the ideal sentiment in respect to an immortal life.

It is assumed that in our modern life the hope of immortality is greatly in excess of the belief. And this perhaps is true; though some of us have had experience of men and women in whom the belief was stronger than the hope, and some of us have had, in our own breasts, moments of weariness or languor or baffled imagination when to be sure of everlasting, dreamless sleep would be most pleasant. Who has not sometimes found the thought of the eternal years oppressive, and meditated with himself, "Better too little than too much," taking to heart the envy of Tithonus for "happy men that have the power to die"? Who, seeking to prefigure many things implied in immortality, has not sometimes imagined that absolute extinction would be better than some possible situations? But this flagging of the pulse of hope, in our own time an exceptional occurrence, a mood of over-burdened, over-imaginative souls, has in times past been characteristic of wide reaches of humanity. We make a great mistake

when we import the modern sentiment of hope respecting immortality into all the historic manifestations of human thought. Whatever is now the case, dread of a future life, dread of indefinite continuance, was characteristic of millions of the followers of Buddha for many centuries. To be delivered from the round of birth and death, and enter into Nirvana, — absence complete of all desire and consciousness, — this was the wished-for goal. In Greek and Roman thought, not hope but dread seems to have been the average sentiment with which belief in immortality was entertained. Very unhappy were the heroes roaming the Elysian fields, chafing in idleness, filled with a passionate regret for the old human joys of battle and victorious love. And even upon Christian ground, only the unquestioning assurance of personal salvation, the most secure possession of the least imaginative souls, was for many centuries a safeguard against the terrors of the grave and what might be beyond its narrow pass.

> "Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendent world! —
> 't is too horrible!
> The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise
> To what we fear of death."

So Shakspere's Claudio bewails, but there is a representative quality in the words. Many were of this way of thinking: believing in a future life, but not hoping for it, — nay, rather dreading it. To have been certain of annihilation would have been a gracious boon.

Hope and belief in perfect equipoise is the ideal condition. If one or the other must be in excess, let it by all means be the hope. To hope and not believe — this may

be sad. But to believe and not hope; to cry, Tithonus-like, "Take back thy gift," — this is "too horrible." Better that all belief should perish, hope remaining still, than that belief should be far in advance, hope lagging far behind. But this is not the danger that is most frequently present in these latter days. Now, it is hope that leads, belief that lags. There are isolated exceptions, but this relation is the rule.

The immortal hope and the belief in immortality have had very similar rational foundations, but the emphasis of the hope has been quite differently placed from that of the belief — on practical considerations rather than on such as are purely theoretical. For example: the Platonic idea, that the soul is an indivisible unit, has played a distinguished part in the argument for immortality, as a ground for the belief. So, too, has the idea that the soul is immaterial and therefore indestructible. But the immortal hope has seldom taken counsel with either of these ideas. Men "beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies" have strengthened their belief by these considerations, but men and women who have seen the light of life go out in faces strong or fair have nourished their hopes upon a different diet. No indivisible unit was the man or woman or the little child whom we forever miss; nay, but a unit infinitely divisible, having for us an infinite variety of gleaming lights and tender shadows. No immaterial substance was it that we loved and that we hope to see again.

> "Communion in spirit? Forgive me,
> But I, who am earthy and weak,
> Would give all my incomes from dreamland
> For the touch of her hand on my cheek."

Over against the philosopher's indivisible unit and his soul's immateriality, the natural man has set such poems as that little one which sings:

"God does not send us strange flowers every year;
When the spring winds blow o'er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces,
The violet is here.

"It all comes back, the odor, grace, and hue,
Each sweet relation of its life repeated;
Nothing is lost, no looking-for is cheated;
It is the thing we knew.

"So after the death-winter it will be;
God will not put strange sights in heavenly places;
The old love will look out from the old faces;
Violet, I shall have thee."

A groundless expectation, do you say? But who of us is there for whom there does not shine at least one face, made so completely, as it seems to us, in the soul's image, that it were as easy to imagine the annihilation of the soul as of the face? Oh, would to God it might be here even as the most daring have believed! But, be it as it may, the hope that

"The old love will look out from the old faces,"

an indefeasible hope, is worth a thousand and ten thousand such beliefs as that the soul is an indivisible unit or an immaterial substance.

Consider some of the means by which the immortal hope has been suggested and inspired, consider some of the functions it has from time to time performed, and then decide with me whether the indictment that has been brought against it, charging it with being egotistic, selfish, and demoralizing, is made good. The immortal hope has often been suggested and inspired by intolerable social conditions. Often, but not always. There have been social conditions so intolerable that men have been unable to conceive of life on any terms that would be worth the having. The phenomena of Buddhism find their explanation here. It has not always been so bad as

this. But it has often been so bad that hope of any amelioration here has been out of the question. And yet "there must be refuge." Where but beyond the limits of this mortal life? My concern at present is not with the rationality or irrationality of this inference. To infer a good heaven from a bad earth would surely be an irrational inference, but for the major premise that the Lord is merciful and just. But when life was intolerable, and there was no chance of earthly betterment, this premise would have been impossible without the hope of an immortal life. And a hope that has enabled men to keep alive their faith in the Eternal Goodness, when otherwise it would have gone to utter wreck, is not to be despised. Here would be its sufficient justification if it had no other. It is charged with selfishness. Excellent selfishness! such as has been the spur of civilization all the centuries down, — the discontent of men with intolerable social conditions. But there was altruism here, as well as the desire for individual happiness. It was not merely their own sufferings by which men were oppressed. That pain in a brother's side, of which Eugénie de Guérin complained, was almost universal then. It was not so much their individual suffering, as the world-pain in their hearts, that made the immortal hope so necessary to the men and women of the Middle Age who gave the age its tone. It is complained that this hope was correlated with a dream of idleness, as it has been frequently in more modern times. Admit it, and what then? There has been much amusement at the expense of this idea of an idle heaven. But the amusement has been generally that of men and women not particularly crushed with overwork, and the idea, so far as it has had any real vitality, has got it from the men and women who have been so crushed. It makes a difference. The man whose work is his best play, or the man whom forced inaction holds like a dog in leash,

— these may well picture to themselves a future life, the essential genius of which shall be "action, action, action." Mr. Ingersoll, for example, yawns with anticipated *ennui* at the suggestion of an idle heaven, and so he assails it with all the resources of his lively wit; and, when he is done with it, it is battered into a truly ridiculous shape. But if he had been obliged to work all his life long at hard, ill-paid, and uncongenial toil, a vision of eternal rest would, I am sure, have attractions for him that it has n't now, — attractions not unlike those which it had for the over-tasked millions of mediæval Europe, and has to-day for some of the overtasked people of the United States. And I, for one, am glad that men and women have been able to sustain their fainting hearts with such a hope, and that they are still able, when there is nothing better to be had. If you prefer, as I do, a working heaven, there is nothing in the conditions of the problem to prevent your hoping for that. It is complained that the imagination of a heavenly paradise has postponed the earthly paradise to a more distant period. It may have done so; but if in the mean time this imagination has made the condition of mankind a little less intolerable, the generous millennium will not be sorry to have been thus delayed. But what if the hope of better things beyond was the only hope of better things that could endure in certain evil times; what if only in this way the hope of ameliorated conditions of existence could be kept alive until it could be planted in congenial soil? Much might be said in proof of these positions.

The immortal hope has had no stronger ally in the course of its historical development than the sentiment of justice; and because the sentiment of justice has been one of the grandest sentiments that the human heart has known, the immortal hope is proved by this alliance not to have been so selfish and unworthy as some would have us

to believe. For it is not as if success, honor, and happiness had been dealt out to men in due proportion to their several abilities and their just deserts. Granted that the inequalities of human life are not so great as they appear to the superficial observer. Granted that the man who counts his wealth by millions is hardly less a drudge than the man who carries brick and mortar to the foundations of his magnificent house, which may or may not shelter a happy home. Granted that the parable of Dives and Lazarus, wherein Dives — for being rich, and for no other reason — is lodged in hell, and Lazarus — for being poor, and for no other reason — is lodged in Abraham's bosom, is the least of all the parables, the most doubtfully wise and good. But when every such allowance has been made, there remains a stupendous range of facts on which the hope of immortality may draw for its assurance that, if God is just, then there must be an after-life to vindicate the cause of many who on this "bank and shoal of time" have been the victims of incalculable wrong. In the habitually mistranslated passage, Job declares, "I know that my vindicator liveth, and that he will yet stand upon the earth." But the vindicator of good men and women, crushed by the weight of foul aspersions, does not always stand upon the earth before they die and vindicate their cause. They die and leave a tarnished name, perhaps never to be made bright at any time, I went one day and saw enacted the saddest of all written tragedies, that of "the gentle lady married to the Moor," as real to me for the time, so perfect was Salvini's wondrous art, as the concretest element of my experience. You say, perhaps, that Desdemona knew that she was innocent, and, knowing this, was better off than if she had been so esteemed while guilty of Iago's slightest charge. And we shall all agree to this: but oh, the pity of it, if nowhere in the sweep of all the stars was there a place for her to look Othello in the fac

and know he knew her, as he did too late, incapable of wrong! And do not say this tragical situation was of Shakspere's making. It was; but things more tragical are happening every day. The hope of immortality has been nourished in all ages by this tragic spectacle. Some failure here there may be to appreciate the intrinsic values of righteousness and evil-doing. But this failure is not to be wondered at. That so many who are good and kind and honorable and just should suffer loss of fortune, reputation, everything that makes life worth living, while base and cruel men lack for no sweet or pleasant thing, — few things have been more creditable to human nature than the hope that we shall live to see how such things can be possible and yet the Eternal Justice never for one moment halt. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But that he does do right it is impossible for us to think, if what we see is all. And it is not any sordid hope of compensation to the evil or the good, for deeds here unrequited, that has been the principal inspiration of the hope of immortality, as related to the tragic side of life. No, but the same desire that gave to Milton's epic flight such strength of wing:

> "to assert Eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men."

Not justice *to* man, but the justice *of* God, has been the inspiring thought. No egotism here. For egotism would be glad to find "a mortal man more just than God." That such a thing can never be, — this assurance has been one of the deepest sources of the immortal hope, which has by this alliance proved itself a great and worthy and unselfish hope.

Again: the hope of immortality has been nourished by the sense of human greatness, by the reverence inspired by men of mighty intellect and generous heart and stren-

uous will. When such men die we cannot make them dead. It seems impossible that the Eternal can be so unthrift as to resolve them back into a few earths and gases. The conservation of energy, the persistence of force, would seem to be an insuperable bar to any such conclusion. What conservation of the energy, what persistence of the force that was in Shakspere, in Milton, in Washington, was there in the mere basketful of ashes into which their bodies turned in a few years, if that was all of them? But the hope of immortality, as it concerns itself with human greatness, does not rely upon these possible considerations. It has no formal argument wherewith to justify itself. Only it is so difficult to imagine the complete cessation of that force of character or genius which has delighted us with the manifestations of its grace and power. We cannot think the void which would be made by such annihilation. Not long ago I saw a letter from Dr. Dewey to his dear friend Dr. Bellows, — both of them know to-day whether they hoped too much, — in which the old flame of his genius leaped up out of the expiring embers of his life. It was a letter of resentment at the destruction of the physical organism by the circumstance of death. How intolerable, he said, that this eye which has seen such wonders, this ear which has heard such harmonies, should be resolved into the dust and gases of unorganized matter! But he expressed these thoughts with all the splendor of that rhetoric which was the most natural gesture of his mind. And they were not unnatural. But if we thus resent the ruin of the eye and ear, how much more keenly might we resent the ruin of the imagination, the conscience, the affection, and the will of man, and not the ruin only, but the absolute annihilation, while of the physical organism there is something left that can be reorganized, made into a rose or lily it may be in time! And when the imagination, the con-

science, the affection, the volition, is not that of any ordinary person, but of some great king of thought or action, then well may our resentment be so great, at any possible destruction, that it shall burst into a sudden flower of hope, and even lusty affirmation that it can never, never be. And when the great one dead has struggled hard for many years to plant the standard of truth or justice some furlongs farther on into the heart of chaos, then is our hope made still more strong by the demands of our imaginative sympathy that the great one dead shall from some height of heaven look down and see the triumph of his cause. It is not enough for us that John Brown, dying on the scaffold, said of his dying, "It will pay." We want to be assured that he has seen that it did pay, — and oh, how well!

Through all this range of thought and feeling the hope of immortality may be out of all proportion with the rational justification which the facts afford. But for the present I am only concerned to vindicate the possible nobility, unselfishness, and moral inspiration of this hope; and this, it seems to me, is done, in part, by showing its alliance with men's reverence for high genius and exalted character.

Every great stream has many sources that supply its swelling flood, and these sources are sometimes as opposite as north and south. So here: the sense of greatness and imperishable worth feeds not the stream of our immortal hope a whit more generously, than the sense of human weakness, maimed and stunted life, arrested development, men and women for whom life is *not* worth living if this present life be all. If any are "to drop headforemost in the jaws of vacant darkness, and to cease," let it by all means be those for whom it has not been all of life to live, to exist merely. Perish the saints and heroes, the greatest and the best the world has ever

known! perish utterly Channing and Parker, Luther and Xavier, Socrates and Jesus, rather than that the millions who came here to swarm and fester for a little while, too miserable to be conscious of their misery, should never know that life has possibilities quite infinitely different from all of this! "It is the will of your heavenly Father that not one of *these little ones* should perish." The hope of immortality assimilates these words of Jesus, giving them infinite expansion. What logic there is here, I pause not to discover. My only claim is that the hope of immortality, fed by this sense of human misery, this longing that the most miserable of men shall have a chance to live before they die forever, is not an ignoble, not an unworthy hope. By this sign it conquers, if by no other. The criticism generally comes from those who dream a dream of an ideal and perfected humanity here on this earth. It is a noble dream, ennobling all who cherish it and strive to realize some little fraction here and now of its sublime integrity. But if this dream is noble and ennobling, what can there be ignoble and debasing in the dream of a good time coming for the millions upon millions who cannot live to see that glorious day, who have already endured the evil of existence for a little while and gone their way — and whither? While I have life I never will surrender the hope that they have gone to other life and larger opportunity.

It is contended that the hope of individual amelioration in another sphere of being slackens the pulse of effort for the perfection of humanity upon the earth. That it does so in many instances I shall not deny, but that there is a necessary relation here I am unable to believe. Certain it is that, so far, those who have labored most effectively for the perfection of humanity upon the earth have believed in its perfection in the heavens. Even in these last days it has been so. Where will you find a man

whose dream of an ideal humanity upon the earth was grander than Theodore Parker's, or a man who worked in a more upright, downright fashion to make the dream a fact? But then, again, where will you find a man whose hope of immortality was so strong as his, save that it had too much of calm assurance to be hope at all? It was not otherwise with Channing. And Garrison, to whom the heavens were opened, to whom it was granted to hold, as he believed, no doubtful intercourse with his beloved dead, I never heard — did you? — that he was ever swerved by the attraction of the heavens from his duty here on earth. I never heard — did you? — that the down-trodden millions of humanity called upon him in vain. Plenty of people there are for whom "one world at a time" is quite enough, but in great souls there is abundant room for both attractions.

If the belief in immortality has suffered from the development of scientific thought, the hope has been affected in an opposite manner. The prophets of ideal humanity offer to us their vision of the race of men to be, "full-summed in all their powers," as an entirely satisfactory substitute for the vision of immortal life. But science, never doubted by these prophets, comes and pictures forth a time when life shall be impossible upon the surface of the earth. This, then, is the consummation of ideal humanity, the final outcome of the kingdom of heaven upon earth:

> "A moment's halt — a momentary taste
> Of Being from the well amid the waste —
> And lo! the phantom caravan has reached
> The NOTHING it set out from — oh, make haste!" *

If there is nothing here to justify belief in immortality, there is much to call for hope. An ideal humanity, secure

* Omar Khayyám.

of endless satisfaction of the fair and bounteous earth, is well and good; but an ideal humanity withering in the blast of an impending doom — there is not much in such a thought that is particularly cheering or consoling. If this is the real conclusion of the whole matter, it is a most lame and impotent conclusion. Let us by all means encourage the dream of an ideal humanity, and work to make it real, but let us cherish simultaneously the grander dream of a humanity safe from the doom which science threatens to our present home, a humanity which shall conserve the energies of truth and love which have been active here when the poor withering planet is no more the home but only "the great tomb of man."

And still I have not touched what is perhaps the purest source of the immortal hope. This purest source is human affection. The immortal hope — it is the hope that somehow, somewhere, we know not how or where, we shall meet again with those whom we have loved and seemed to lose, the mother with the little ones for whose lives she put her own in jeopardy, the husband with the wife of other years, the wife with the husband, the hero with his compatriots, the men of science with their peers, all who have loved with all whom they have lost. Reason for belief may not be here; but is there not an infinite ground for hope? And is not the hope an altogether pure and sweet and noble and ennobling and exalting hope?

> "Here eyes do regard you
> In eternity's stillness."

I would not believe this too literally. I want no raids of an invisible host upon my privacy; even the dearest I have lost I would not have intruding unannounced on the seclusions which are sacred from all comers. But who of us has not some friend in the Beyond with whom we

dare not hope to meet again, and at the same time live an unworthy life? "Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself." A demoralizing hope? Nay, rather it is full of moral inspiration. If ever I am tempted to do something which is easy and pleasant instead of something hard and disagreeable, which nevertheless I ought to do, if I can only think of those lost saints of mine who always expected me to do right and always showed the way, at once my will is fortified. No matter if we have our living friends who are a law unto our lives, a succor to our wills. The cloud of witnesses cannot be too full of eager and expectant souls. And somehow the influence of our beloved dead comes to us purified of all earthly dross and stain. Theirs is a flawless moral inspiration.

I am aware that I have named only a few out of the many aspects that are presented by my theme. I am aware that there is such a thing as "other-worldliness." I need hardly tell you this. The hope of immortality can be cherished in a mean and sordid way; it can be selfish; it can be demoralizing. It often is. All this may be allowed, and still I cannot but believe that the survival of this hope is a "survival of the fittest," and that it has survived because of the good which has been associated with it and not because of the evil. Not till men's passion for justice, not till their reverence for the great and good, not till their sympathy with human misery, not till their desire to round out their imperfect knowledge of the world into some greater fulness, not till the yearning love of friendship and of kin, — not until all these things are proved unworthy can unworthiness be predicated of the hope of immortality, for it is strong with the strength of all these things, great with their greatness, beautiful with their beauty.

Poetry has been defined as that mode of expression in which the splendor of the diction is proof sufficient of the things asserted. And immortality, I have sometimes thought, is that doctrine in which the splendor of the thing asserted is proof sufficient of the thing which it asserts? An unworthy doctrine? An ignoble doctrine? Nay, rather it is so worthy, so noble, that to dare to entertain it is a piece of wonderful and godlike daring. It is the purest possible expression of the grandest self-respect. I must confess I do not like the sound of this humility which talks so volubly about the presumption of expecting an immortal life. It has a hollow ring. It would indeed be presumptuous to expect this on the basis of anything that we have done to merit such a gift. But we expect it on the basis of our essential nature, compact of such stupendous possibilities, as yet all unfulfilled. Because as yet we have but learned the alphabet of knowledge and of love; because we wish to go on and spell out some of the bigger words, some of the higher meanings in the Book of Life; because, in our best moments, we have felt that we are living on the thinnest outer surface of our possible good, and wish to penetrate far, far beneath all this, — we hope our hope, and give it up in answer to no hasty challenge, be he that challenges never so noble.

The doubt of immortality, that has been of late so common, has been a very serviceable doubt; for it has set men to work in many different ways to find some substitute for immortality as an object of hope when this has been destroyed forever. There could be no grander tribute to the hope of immortality than the high character of the substitutes that men have felt obliged to offer us. Let us be glad that for such as cannot hope for immortality there are such things for them to stay their hearts

upon a little. Let us be glad that these things can be ours, together with the hope of immortality. They are no substitutes, but they are splendid complements. The one book of the time that deals with the great problem of social regeneration, when it has chanted in such tones, as are not elsewhere to be heard, the future of a redeemed and glorified humanity upon the earth, is still unsatisfied. It has a palinode, an after-song of personal immortality.

I welcome all of you, who care to cherish it, to the enjoyment of this mighty hop . No science that is worthy of the name has yet denied the possibility of its fulfilment. You may not dogmatize, you may not have one word of blame for those who are without belief, and dare not even hope; but if you choose to have it so, this hope is yours by an inalienable right. Cleanse it of all impurity; free it from all selfishness; make it the continent of all best desires, all grandest aspirations; and then live as men ought to live who dare to cherish such a hope. Make yourselves indispensable to God. He will not, oh! believe me, he will not leave your souls in the grave; he will not suffer his holy ones to see corruption!

How can we think these thoughts and not think of those who, when the springtime came a year ago, were with us to enjoy its coming; and now —

> "The trees shall wake from their forgetful sleep
> Unto new blossom, and a tender green, —
> The countless trees! — but never one will keep
> A little leaf or flower that *they* have seen"?

And with our thoughts of those whose graves have never known till now the touch and thrill of spring, we blend our thoughts of all the dear ones who have ever vanished from our sight.

And for all of these, and for all the innumerable company who have gone forth upon the same mysterious way,

we will hope with an undying hope and trust with an unconquerable trust —

> "Since he who knows our need is just —
> That somehow, somewhere meet we must.
> Alas for him who never sees
> The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
> Who hopeless lays his dead away,
> Nor looks to see the breaking day
> Across the mournful marble play!
> Who hath not learned in hours of faith,
> The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
> That Life is ever Lord of Death,
> And Love can never lose its own!"

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[No. 43]

THE

DOCTRINE OF PRAYER

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

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THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

Two facts impress us when we begin to think about prayer. On the one hand, there was never so much confusion of thought as to what prayer means; there were never so many doubts and difficulties to prevent people from praying; the justification of prayer to the reason was never so urgently demanded. On the other hand, the love of prayer, in those who continue to pray, seems to be, if possible, more profound than ever, and especially in those who are the most fearless and even radical seekers of truth.

This is the more noticeable, because, since prayer belongs to the sphere of the sentiments, one might easily pardon the pious feeling that would save it from the approach of criticism. It is like love, one might say, which does not want to stop in its course and to reason. Better go on loving than ask why you love; and so better simply go on praying than stop and ask why you pray. For sentiments are like flowers, it is said, and will die beneath the breath of criticism. It is fine to see that this is not the case; for real love is deeper when reason shows its basis in facts, and religious feeling runs freer when reason has straightened its course, and shown the law of its being.

We are not free, however, to choose whether or not we will ask questions about prayer. The history of the development of religion presents so many significant changes that no one can be excused from sometimes

wondering in what manner men are going to continue to pray. Certain of the highest conceptions which we have learned, as they bring a new valuation of the terms of religion, demand that our doctrine of prayer shall reconcile itself with them.

One of these conceptions is the unity of the world. As long as the world did not seem to be a unity, and hostile tribes had their rival gods, Bel, Baal, or Jehovah, the stronger of whom would show himself by giving his votaries victory, it was permissible to pray for all sorts of conflicting interests, — to pray for sunshine when your neighbor prayed for rain; to pray for the ruin of the very men who might be praying for your own ruin. Monotheism did not at first carry the idea of complete unity. You might still beat your enemies by praying harder than they; your prayer might change the will of the Almighty, and make him repent.

But we have arrived at a conception of the unity of God which seems to cut off such prayer altogether. Whatever is not just, is not beneficent, is not well for the whole universe as truly as for us, no prayer of ours, we think, will ever bring. Whereas, if with one single purpose all things are ruled by God in beneficence, why shall we not trust him to give us whatever we need; and why should we ask for anything which, if it is best, will indeed surely come to us, and, if not best, cannot be?

Another kindred conception which demands that the doctrine of prayer shall be harmonized with it is law. As long as things were thought to come by caprice or by chance, it seemed permissible to pray for all sorts of unlikely and impossible things. You could pray and not work, and hope to surpass those who worked. The element of the supernatural might be looked for anywhere to enter in and set natural means at defiance. Had it not been permitted to prayer to roll back the flow of a river and the tides of the sea, to stop the sun in its

course, to bring rain, and restore the dead? Meanwhile, for thousands of years, men were learning the facts that those who prayed did not reap, but those who planted; that those who won the victories fought more than they prayed; that everywhere an inevitable chain of causes led up to every event, no one of which could be left out and the event remain the same. There is thus no short cut by which one can avoid the law of a thing. The veracity of God would seem impeached, if one could get by intervention what has been made to depend upon a regular sequence of means.

This is so true, that those who feel obliged to believe in historical miracles and in the general efficacy of prayer are found to limit its particular and present application within a very narrow range of actual possibilities. Few thoughtful people probably join any longer in prayer for rain who really think that their prayers will make any difference, or expect anything of God for the accomplishment of which they do not take the regular means.

Where, then, shall we draw the line between legitimate and illegitimate objects of prayer? Shall we not leave out of our prayers the petition for material blessings, and simply limit our asking to moral and spiritual things? Even this latter region is searched by inquiry, as it is seen to be also equally traversed by laws. Is it possible, people doubtfully ask, to influence an absent friend through our prayers, to shield him from temptation or convert him? Thus, through all the history of religion, a constant change has gone on in the elements which are supposed to bring success; there is always less of the supernatural and more of the natural, always more work and less prayer. Where shall be the vanishing point in this process of change?

The great Christian idea of unselfishness has also, strangely enough, brought its limitations upon old methods and ideas of prayer. You have no right, it says, to

pray for anything merely private and personal; you have no right to want anything that shall not be for the good of your fellow-men. And the very sublimity of the ideal of such prayer somewhat narrows the range of things to be prayed for, and condemns and discourages the prayers of those who have not attained unselfishness.

And then, besides, as the thought of God has slowly but vastly altered, the doctrine of prayer has had to adapt itself to this enlarged thought. Once there was a being, now here, now there, on the top of Olympus, or in the Holy of Holies, or sitting in state on an actual throne, surrounded by angels in heaven, before whom prayers ascended. If the highest minds conceived of God as filling the heavens and present everywhere, at most the heaven of the Hebrews, and the universe which Augustine knew, were small, compared with the regions of space, with its infinite distances, with which modern astronomy has made us familiar. The God seemed more accessible who lived in the sky, and might at any time appear out of the clouds, than the God who is present in all the myriads of distant suns as truly as here in this world. And the new infinite is infinitely vaster than the old infinite. No wonder that men have craved the presence of the saints, or the Holy Mother, or a Christ, somewhat limited and nearer than God, to whom they might pray.

I hardly need to touch upon the difficulties of a further scepticism, which not only thinkers, but common people, and even children discover, and which few perhaps in our day are quite free from? Is there a God? they whisper. How can we be assured, since no one can ever see him? And if he is, being so infinite, how can we think that he hears what we say?

I have tried to present, as clearly as possible, the difficulties which beset the idea of prayer. Let us see what

admissions they seem to require. In the first place, the idea of prayer, considered as a supernatural means of getting specific benefits, must be pronounced not only irrational, but irreligious. It is inconceivable that a just and beneficent God, worthy to be called our Father, should make blessings or success depend upon the arbitrary fact that a formal petition had been filed. We can conceive indeed that, if one of two mothers thought more of her son, loved him better, had higher ideals for him, was more devout in her spirit, and trained him more carefully, this son would prove to be a truer man than the son of the mother who cared less for all these higher things; but we cannot conceive — the mothers being, in respect of training, high ideals, love, and devoutness, equal — that God should make any distinction in his blessings, because one asked him to bless her child, and the other simply took his blessing for granted. Much less can we conceive of two farmers, each of whom faithfully planted and tended his farm, that God should make any distinction in the harvest between them, because one prayed, and the other, who worked equally hard, simply trusted to God's laws of the harvest.

We must pronounce as equally irrational and irreligious the idea that prayer, as an act of worship or a form of words, brings about some difference in God's feelings toward the worshipper, or makes God favorable, as though one were safer for praying. Let me not be misunderstood. An essential difference has taken place when a man who has been vain or frivolous becomes serious and reverent, — a difference in the man himself, a difference in his relations to the world about him, and, you may say, to God; but no essential difference can be conceived to take place by the mere fact that he has repeated a prayer.

The fact is, the greatest misunderstanding about the nature of prayer has come from men's thought that the

words and the form of the prayer affected God and were for God's sake, as though God would not know unless you told him, or as though he were susceptible of being changed or influenced by our words. It would hardly seem to need to be said, on the contrary, that the words are not for the sake of God, but for the sake of man. Jesus expressed this clearly enough, when he said, "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." The analogy of the domestic and all other friendly human relations shows the same thing. The wiser, kinder, and fairer the parent, the less he needs that his children should tell him their wishes. Their attitude toward him he cares for; but for their words, only as these express their sympathy, which, indeed, if he is sensitive, he hardly asks to have put into words. And the nearer his children come into sympathy with him, the fewer things they find it necessary to petition him to do or even to explain. How, then, can any one suppose that God, who presumably knows men's thoughts, feelings, and necessities with an accuracy which no language can express, and who, whatever man's wishes, is only going to do what is best for the whole world of men, needs our words or is affected by them?

But the words and form of prayer are only for the sake of men: because without words men cannot think; because words make a clearer channel in which their feelings may run, and, if true, express feelings; because words give definiteness to their wishes, aspirations, and intentions, and because the form of their worship may help or else hinder the worshipful spirit.

We have thus ruled out as irreligious the idea of prayer as a shorter way to get what God has made to depend upon work, thought, and natural means, or as a method of supplementing inferior character or narrower intelligence. We have ruled out as irreligious the idea

of prayer, as constituting a difference in God's favor between men otherwise equally just, true, energetic, and worthy. We have ruled out the idea as irreligious, that the words and forms of prayer affect and influence God. Let us see now what purely rational elements in prayer we have left.

I begin with the most common and widely recognized element in prayer. It is some sort of a Want: various wants are the stuff out of which all the highest forms of prayer eventually come. It is to express the want, and to make it more definite, that we use the words, but the want makes the prayer. It is a call for help. To a beneficent God, it would be a prayer, whether expressed or not. Neither would it make a particle of difference to whom it was addressed, whether to an idol, or a patron saint, or to Jesus, or to Buddha, provided only it was a real want. It might be a very low or material want or dread. It might be unworthy, foolish, or impossible. Of all the prayers which you hear, you might make a division between those which expressed men's honest desires and those which expressed no real desire whatever; and these last would not be prayers. You might look into the homes of a great city; and, seeing the misery, poverty, and pain, you would hear a thousand mute but most eloquent prayers from people who did not know that they prayed, but only wanted, — they hardly knew what.

All actual prayers fall into two classes: one, of desires for those things which are unnecessary and hurtful; and the other, of rightful and healthy desires. Now, it is the law of the world, — it is at least a great, well-known tendency of things, and a marvellous tendency it is, — that the bad, false, morbid desires come to naught; even when they seem to be met, they eventually defeat themselves. Whereas the real, healthy wants and desires, in

exact proportion to their definiteness and intensity, always are met. It is not merely a word quoted from Scripture, "Ask, and ye shall receive." Jesus quoted it out of the more ancient book of nature. Like all other rules, it has its limitations; but it is precisely the law upon which every kind of success and all our hopes of future progress for our race are built. Within certain lines (and no one knows how far they go, or what unknown possibilities they admit) we believe that whatever man wants that can add to his comfort, power, or happiness, he shall achieve. The man who wants most — that is, who prays most — other things being equal, shall have most. The nation or generation which desires most — that is, which prays hardest — shall work out greatest progress.

It is in this sense, in the nature of things, that prayers have their answer. For, whatever is good, there is a way of getting it, or laws that condition it. If you believe in God, it is he who inspires the want, and it is his laws by which the wants are met. You throw the force of your want for a thing, therefore, into the ordained way, or into obeying its laws, and you shall have it. You want a harvest, and you turn your want into the channel of the law of the harvest. You want to shield a child from temptation, and you obey the laws of the building of character and of moral influence. You who turn the force of the most intense want most precisely into its constituted way of approach shall have more, and, I may say, shall please God better, than you whose want is meagre. You who want, and take no pains to set your want to work in the direction of its accomplishment, shall wait forever, till your want learns to express itself according to the law of the thing wanted. In short, an effectual prayer is, in its essence, a want or need which goes out into intelligent obedience of its eternal conditions.

We have purposely begun our analysis of prayer low down, and we have admitted at first into our conception a whole range of desires which seem unworthy. For a true doctrine of prayer must be comprehensive. It draws no impracticable, arbitrary lines between things holy and secular. It is not going to say to men, You shall only pray for spiritual blessings, but must not say anything about your daily bread. It is not going to forbid little children from asking the simplest things which they desire. It is not going to stop common men from beginning to pray till they have exactly learned what things are possible to get. But it takes in all sorts of desires. It recognizes the saving element of good in our desires for the things which are not best for us. It says, You either cannot pray at all, or you can pray for everything which you really want. In short, it begins just as everything most noble in this world begins, at the lowest stage, and waits for the development of higher and fuller conceptions.

Now let us suppose, without any thought yet of speaking our needs to God, but purely for our own benefit, for clearness of apprehension and definiteness of intention and plan, that we formed a habit of expressing our desires and wishes in words, — that mentally or orally, if you please, we considered for a few moments each morning what we most needed and what we proposed to do. Suppose a family were to put into definite words the things desirable for their happiness. Suppose the people of a community, being gathered together once a week, heard the definite statement of their common needs, for the fulfilling of which they purposed to labor. Such expression of men's needs and desires would not only be rational, but would actually help men to turn their energies into the channel of the proper conditions of successful work, or rather *such expression would itself be one of the conditions of success.* The

definite agreement that the people of a community wanted just government or the amelioration of poverty would be a legitimate condition of turning their attention to the means by which these things could be had.

Leaving this element of prayer now, which consists of wants and expresses wants, we can go higher. A second element of prayer is Reverence. Whatever the Salvation Army may do or say to the contrary, a certain reverent feeling is essential to our thought of prayer. The facts of the universe beget reverence. It grows with our knowledge of the wonder, the power, the beauty, the unity, in the midst of which we are living. It grows with our sense of smallness and helplessness, with our dreads and terrors. It is born and grows out of the sense of mystery, which our utmost knowledge only serves to set off as more incomprehensible. It comes as we brood over the facts of human life and history, the solemn march toward death of all the nations, and the slow, unceasing conflict which has yielded us everything for which life is worth living. It is helped and encouraged by all grand and genuine words which express it. These, and other such things, make us wholesomely serious, forbid flippancy, and bring us, as it were, to our knees before — what shall I say to which every earnest mind will assent? — before the Infinite Nature around us.

Another rational element of prayer is Aspiration. In prayer, one sees ideals of moral character after which he struggles, and which put his present self to shame. There is a nobler life which he longs for, and which, it seems to him, he would give everything else to possess. We should be sorry for the man who had never felt these holier throbs of aspiration, nor ever cared to utter them. We should rather have our children die than never be stirred by these divine visions of noble living.

Unselfishness, as we have already noticed, is another element of prayer. To pray means that all one's sym-

pathies are quickened; that one sees the good of others; that one pities men's toil and sorrow; that one, choosing between the good of the world and his own private good, would prefer to put his private interests under. So far as this disinterested element comes into prayer, and prayer is the earnest longing after the highest welfare of others, it is rational. Whatever form of words helps toward expressing this disinterested feeling, reason accepts.

Moreover, prayer involves a certain Adjustment of ourselves to the ruling relations of life. This is probably its highest function. The ancient Christian form of words, "Thy will be done," expresses it. The Stoic thought of resignation covers it also. Man is uneasy and restless, unless he feels some bond which takes his life into unity with everything else. He cannot be happy or content as a mere detached individual or spectator. There is some instinct in him which seeks peace and harmony. In prayer, therefore, he puts passion aside; he ceases to fight and rebel against the inevitable, to push and to struggle to get where he does not belong. He faces the facts and trusts the laws of his being. It is as though he were a single instrument in a great orchestra, and prayer is the getting into tune. Words as before, if sincere, rationally express and direct this profound longing of our natures after unity.

We have risen now to an ideal of prayer which is sufficiently worthy, and also indisputably rational. In prayer, you enter into the wholesome mood of reverence, a mood true to the facts of your life; you aspire after the best examples of noble living; you take the whole brotherhood of man into your enlarged sympathies; you adjust your will into the nicest harmony with the facts, the requirements, and the laws of life: and in this ideal mood, combined of peace, unselfishness, and reverent feeling, you lay out before you and consider all the de-

sires of your heart. You distinguish between real wants and false; the real wants grow stronger, and you see with new clearness what to do. It is not Nirvana into which you have entered, in which consciousness is quenched and desires cease; but you have thrown yourself into complete connection with the heart-throb of the universe; you are stirred with its life, you are desiring with its great desires; you are working out its work, and move with its rhythmical movement.

I am not saying a word yet of God. I am only supposing, so far, a kind of prayer which would be as truthful and helpful and resting to Herbert Spencer as to Cardinal Manning. I am supposing a kind of prayer which Mr. Adler might, for aught I see, honestly admit in his school for ethical culture. I can conceive that such a minister or speaker, earnest, eager for goodness, intent on reform, free of self-interest and conceit, might, in a few sentences of what would be essentially prayer, express and deepen the earnestness, the humility, and the aspirations of his people, and join them as one in their common desires. I can conceive, without his once naming God, or saying *Thou* and *Thine*, that the words of his prayer should drive narrowness and selfishness out of their hearts, stir all their sympathies, and bring to the focus of wise action all their intentions. Not only this, but the occasional utterance of the purest feelings and most profound needs should set the tune, as it were, for the entire life of the congregation. It has been the pious thought of all times that prayer is not an occasional offering up of a series of petitions to the Almighty, but rather that devout, earnest, and disinterested attitude or mood, in which one should constantly live, and for the attainment of which all formal and oral prayers have their special worth.

I want you to see that the idea of prayer which we have reached is something more than the reflex action of

the mind on itself, as though a man were lifting himself in a basket. But there is something real, outside of one's self, in which the thoughts of prayer find their natural reaction. It is at every point the sense of a grandeur and power outside one's self, of ideals above one's self, of sympathies touching the whole world, of work to be accomplished, and far-reaching purposes, through which we are moved to pray. It is the motion of our spirits to go out into actual relations beyond and above themselves. A faith, very simple indeed, but real, underlies our prayer, that there is something with which, if we can bring ourselves into connection, our life will be fuller and more harmonious. So much of faith is implied in science, which supposes a ground of some sort of intelligible reality in its studies. So much of faith is implied in all schemes of philanthropy, in which the individual thinker and worker believes himself to be working out universal laws of progress, who would despair, if he did not think that the spirit of the universe worked toward progress, and that he was on the winning side. So, in all the highest movements of feeling, man goes out of himself in sublime quest of something grander to which his life belongs.

We are prepared now to go further, and say that prayer accomplishes something. The attitude which it involves is the attitude of the greatest success. It is the attitude in which all friction of obstacle outside or anxiety within is reduced to its minimum, and all things work together to help you. It is the attitude of seriousness, earnestness, and sensitiveness, in which one's best promptings and clearest thoughts come. The fact is, you are using in prayer a series of powerful natural means. The intent and eager fixing of the mind upon a thing, as we have already seen, is one of the sequences which are made to lead to the realization of that particular thing. It is undoubtedly the common element in all the curious

stories of faith — cures. We have never found out how far, by some species of subtle telegraphy, by some pull which mind has on mind, this intentness of will, required by prayer, may reach.

Though we have said nothing of God, we have come very close to it. We must have seemed to be leaving certain ragged edges of argument behind us; we have really been talking of God all along. What did we mean, for instance, by Reverence? Could we intelligently reverence or feel awe before mere forces or distances, however gigantic, or accumulations of matter? Could we feel reverence, if we were doomed to a purely atheistic or material conception of the universe, and were ourselves therefore greater than the unintelligent phenomena which we observed? Is it not before at least the possibility of infinite intelligence, thought, and will, pervading matter and space, and directing force, that we can feel proper reverence? Is not our sense of awe at the unknown possibilities of life which the mysteries of the universe suggest? We remarked earlier, that the idea of God, in its development from sensual forms, had at last seemed almost dissipated by the very immensity of the universe which he was supposed to fill. But, whatever we first seemed to lose in distance through this thought of immensity, we have more than regained in nearness by that same marvellous, modern conception of unity, which at first seemed to be bringing us difficulties in our thought of prayer. The same matter goes into combination in Sirius as here. The same laws govern it; knowing life here, we can at least guess what it is to the limits of space. Moreover, we belong each to this unity. It makes a difference, you may say, to the whole, what we do, or what becomes of us. In a sense more exact than even Jesus knew, no sparrow falleth to the ground unrecognized. Thus, instead of the old thought, that God was sometimes here and sometimes not, that certain

things were religious and all other things secular, that certain events were providential and other things not providential at all, we are learning at last to see the presence of God in all things and all history as the movement of his providence. It is this idea which rules our modern thought of prayer. In our needs, we are moved by the spirit of God. The work which we put forth is only the using of the divine forces, set ready to our hands. And our words are simply the expression of the fact that our lives are bound up in the life of God.

All this becomes emphasized, when we begin to entertain moral aspirations, see ideals of justice and righteousness, and own to the common pressure of conscience. The fact is, there are moral relations and laws, as we call them. There is a moral order, not only within us, but outside of us, one and the same, we conceive, in all worlds. The development of civilization has been a process, not of making this moral order and dictating these laws, but of discovering them and following their lead. A certain definite course of conduct, from which we cannot deviate with impunity, makes us one with this order. It makes no difference with the essential fact what our theories are, whether we are evolutionists or intuitionists. The fact of the moral order is the same, however we come to recognize it. The just, the pure, the unselfish, as we have already seen, have an actual harmony with the universe, which the unjust, the impure, and the covetous lack. It is not man who has created this fact of harmony, any more than man has created the ruling conditions of health. It is not a self-complacency worked up within our minds. It is more than a sense of sympathy with our fellows; for it would hold equally if all men abused and hated us. By some law of things, under which man lives, which has been urging him from the dawn of civilization, he is driven to find his highest harmony in conformity with an inexorable moral order.

I said that it would be prayer if we did not say God, if we simply let out our highest feelings, thoughts, and endeavors; if we only said, "We want health and life and goodness," and did not say, "Give Thou these things," and if we simply came into harmony with the moral order of the universe. I said that this would be rational and useful. But these impressive moral facts which we have stated do not leave us content to stop and say Nature, but draw us on to say Thought; do not leave us content to say the Universe, but draw us on to say Spirit; do not leave us content with the abstraction of a Moral Order, but draw us on to conceive of a Life into fellowship with which we come. For what is an eternal moral order, except as it presupposes an eternal life? or what is an infinite universe, except as a revelation of infinite thought? Use words we must. The word *God* besides being dear by use, sums up our thought that the ultimate fact or power, into whose unity everything is bound up, is alive, is intelligible, is righteous, and loves. True, all these words are makeshifts. How could they be anything else? But Reason not only does not forbid them, but calls them out of our whole vocabulery, and assures us that we have come short, at the best, of comprehending Him "who is all."

Suppose now, under the former idea of prayer, as the utterance of our desires and aspirations, and the loftiest mood of reverence, sympathy, and peace, we frankly recognize what that idea seems always to have contained and suggested, — this thought of the presence of the infinite life of God; that, as we look out on the mystery of being, we see it throbbing with his life; as we enter into the moral order, that we are conscious of the divine fellowship; admit that our desires are his inspiration; as we express and work out every honest and healthy desire, let us think of ourselves both as drawing upon his resources, and as co-workers with him; suppose that

our best intentions are recognized as the attuning of our wills into harmony with the infinite will. Suppose thus, that prayer is conceived as the thinking, willing, feeling, working, being, in unison with the Life of which we partake.

We said what prayer was not, and ruled out certain ideas of it as irreligious. We have said now what prayer is, and have ruled in, I think, those things for which it has been really precious to men. We have said that it is an actual relation of peace, harmony, friendliness, — whatever you may please to call it. We have said that, considered as a man's highest mood, or as the expression of that mood in words, it effects something and makes a difference ; that a man is more when he prays than when he does not pray, is therefore necessarily brought closer to the things which he needs, and therefore has more. And we have expressed our conviction that all the facts which we recognize, or have hinted to us, in prayer are best summed up in the idea of God, or in the closer words, "Our Heavenly Father," with whom prayer is communion.

This idea of prayer, moreover, is large and free. It does not restrict the subjects which prayer may take up. It bids men utter any real wants, from the hunger for daily bread and the fear of impending trouble, to the loftiest spiritual aspiration. It admits the artless words of childhood. It holds that nothing which interests man is trivial to the thought of the Spirit in whom the tiniest insect has life.

All this seems beautiful. It is worthy both of God and of man. It promises to be helpful, comforting, and inspiring. It would seem to meet and fulfil, better than anything else, all man's most profound longings. It specially meets that strange element of his nature which never is touched except by thoughts of the Infinite.

And yet, if this were all which one had to say of prayer, if one could merely make out ever so strong a case for its legitimacy, if one could show no reasons against it and many in favor, I am not prepared to say that we should be moved to pray. It is not as though prayer were a new thing in the world, pleading at the door for admittance, and reason were judging whether it might properly enter; but it has been in the world beyond man's remembrance, and belongs with sentiments as ancient as reason itself. It moves me that men's earliest voices, by some significant instinct, went out in prayer. It moves me that, under all changes, forms, and creeds, prayer, like religion itself, has endured. It moves me to see the worship of men, crying out of their distresses after God. It stirs us yet to read their ancient litanies.

The habit of prayer comes to us as a great fertilizing stream of holy traditions. We believe in it, as in everything else, on authority, because men to whom we look up as the purest tell us that they needed to pray in order to live. The Hebrew prophets are authorities on prayer, because prayer steadied them in wicked times. Jesus is an authority upon prayer, because without it we cannot see how such a life as his could have been possible. The great line of saints, from Paul to Channing and Rowland Williams and Theodore Parker, are authorities with one voice to recommend prayer and make men respect it. Admiring and imitating such men, living in their company, taking them as our ideals, we can hardly help praying. We say over and over, "God give us such lives." We come to church to say it. It does us good, whenever we say it. Said thus, as they said it themselves, our souls going out after God to express it, no other sentiment, no lower form of words means so much.

This brings me to say that we pray on the authority of our own experiences. Reason puts down the barriers.

Reason says, Pray, if you feel inclined; and then Feeling comes surging up to utter itself. All sorts of life-experiences are only half complete, unless they go out into prayer. Our troubles and disappointments, the great sacraments, as they have been called, of marriage, birth, and death, our delight in nature and music, the impulses of popular and patriotic feeling sweeping over us, the stories of heroism, the sudden dangers which bring us up with a start, — all such experiences move us to prayer, and are never so rich as when they most completely merge themselves in the purifying spirit of prayer. Then our burdens seem shared, man's toil and pain seem interpreted, and indefinite access of vigor, courage, and thought seem to flow in, as though indeed God were speaking to his children, and actual connection were made between our finite spirits and the universal life. Prayer thus seems, at least in those moments when we most truly pray, like the sweetest symphony, to soothe and to inspire.

This is not all. However much prayer did for us, if, when we had prayed, it left our reason obscured or made us less loyal to truth, however precious it was, we should hold ourselves bound to give it up. On the contrary, in the attitude of prayer, we see truths, facts, and relations with clearer than usual sight, and we never love truth so much or are nearer being ready to die for it; while as for all virtuous, courageous, and efficient action, as we have already seen, the mood of prayer is that in which we should like always to live.

Finally, I do not see how anything which can be said about prayer should be overwhelmingly convincing, except as one's prepossessions are directed, at least, toward the moral interpretation of life. Let me not be misunderstood to be advocating an attitude of partiality in investigating truth. I mean merely to remind you that the condition of soundness and health is always scientifi-

cally essential to prevent bias and impartiality. You must have sound eyes and steady nerves to see straight and measure exactly. You must have a sound mind, trained to love knowledge and truth, to be an accurate student. And, precisely in the same way, a man must have moral health and a righteous life, before he can appreciate the kind of evidence, and value rightly the impressions, which make the strength of religion.

This is what I mean by demanding certain moral prepossessions of men. For the whole argument of religion has been lifted above the old level of outward and miraculous evidences, and rests upon what we think the impregnable basis of the moral facts, the moral history, and the moral nature of man. But it is idle to talk to men about a moral order in the universe, who acknowledge no such moral order within. It is idle to prove a "power which makes for righteousness" to him who does not love righteousness. It is idle to lay down a doctrine of prayer, whose very essence is the rest and peace of a moral harmony, to him whose only wants are sensual and personal. And it is idle to prove the reality of prayer, itself a spiritual fact, to him who can only appreciate outward signs and wonders. Let us, then, who love to pray and want our children to pray, while teaching them the simple forms of words, underneath which the habit and spirit of actual prayer are developed, be even more patient to train them in stanch and truthful habits of character. For, if they once love honest character above everything else, their own life-experiences may be trusted to lead them up from the prattling of childhood, with its "Now I lay me down to sleep," to the most exalted form of devotion, and Jesus's sublime thought, "Thy will be done."

SMOKE AND THE FLAME, THE

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[No. 44]

WRESTLING AND BLESSING.

BY

WILLIAM C. GANNETT.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
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WRESTLING AND BLESSING.

GENESIS xxxii. 24–31.

A FOSSIL lies before me on the table where I write, a little trilobite, that serves now for a paper-weight. There he lies just as he stopped in his last crawl or swim some million years ago, the body half-bent, the stony eyes still staring! One cannot help wondering — what stopped him; how it happened; and what else had happened in that far-off life, when those black rings were supple and the eyes *saw*. I wish I knew his story. You have the Venus of Milo, perhaps, on the bracket in your parlor, — that proud marble beauty whose mystery her keeper in the Louvre has lately been trying to guess anew. It would be pleasant if we had some *record* how she came under "that little Melian farm," from whose furrows she was unburied, so blurred with stain, and maimed, and aged, but able still to make men mute with delight. We wish we knew who felt the first delight of her, when she was young; who gave her early praise; in whose workshop she grew to such majesty of form.

Somewhat so it is with the old legends in our Bible. We wish we knew how, when, where, by whom, they came into existence. There are a hundred of them, some beautiful, some uncouth, some villainous, in look. Now, they lie fossilized in myths — mysterious fragments, like old statues. Once, they were living and moving; once, they were coming into being as beliefs. These stories have had a life-history in men's minds and hearts. Take the Jacob

story that I just now read (Gen. xxxii. 24–31), where Jacob wrestles through the lonely night with the angel. To trace its origin, we should have to go back to very ancient times, — times when men were on right familiar terms with Deity, and when the Hebrews still had many gods, and Jehovah, not yet the One, was but the Arch-Power who helped their tribe. What the beginning of this special story may have been, probably no one will ever tell except in guesses. Possibly a dim, misshaped tradition of some actual event lies hidden in it. Perhaps, like similar Scandinavian stories of the giants challenging the god Thor, it had a long pre-existent saga-life, from mouth to mouth, before it reached a record. Its origin may have been an early bard's attempt to account for the people's name of Israel, "Prince with God," by fathering it on a brave deed of some ancestor. Whatever its source, to trace it we should have to leave the mental climate of to-day, and, turning back, re-enter an old atmosphere where the faith of the people crystallized itself in legends of the supernatural as naturally as the January mist deposits itself in snow-flakes.

Such legends rise in many ways. We find their relics strewing the beginnings of *all* literatures, embedded in *all* old faiths. And this Bible of ours would be the rock without the fossils, would be that Melian farm without the statue, if it did not hold these things. The trilobite is no sacred beetle to us; but I regard mine with some awe, — it is so much older than I! We do not worship the Venus; but she is a joy forever, in America as in old Greece. Let us use old Bibles in the same way, bringing that kind of reverence, and none other, that each thing in them deserves from to-day. Let their beautiful things be beautiful, let their wicked things be wicked, let the curious things be curious, and the true things, the grand things, be true and grand. The book is but the rock or the farm; what lies *in* it gives the worth. And, as a whole,

the worth of this, our Bible, is very great. Much besides the fossils and the fragments lies therein. Even they, when they no longer are believed as fact, serve still as poetry, supplying hints and emblems for the spiritual experience, — as with the very example cited, the wrestling that brought blessing. What exhales and vanishes as Scripture floats far and wide as hymn. What ceases as history of Jacob or of Jesus, begins to fill a still higher, wider place to us as history of the human mind in some old attitude of worship.

The gist of our Jacob story is simply this: Jacob wrestles through the lonely night with a strange, strong Power, that maims him. But, instead of yielding, he clings, and wrestles on, and *will not let go* wrestling until he has extorted a blessing from his hurter. And when, in turn, he asks the stranger's name, no name is given him; but Jacob guesses it is his God, and calls that night's struggling-place, "God's Face." And he limps off in the morning lame in his thigh, but a crowned victor; and for his prowess wins a new name, "Israel," or "Prince with God."

Here we have something very fine, — a meaning universal, and fresh as yesterday's struggle with our own life's difficulty. The teaching is that Wrestling is the condition of Blessing, — that the long, determined clinch brings coronation, and makes a new man of us, — maimed, perhaps, but still a nobler and a stronger man than before the struggle.

A most aged doctrine! Yes: all the old religions ring with it. Most commonplace! True: the elements of heroism are very commonplace. Those short, two-worded sentences I read from Paul (2 Cor. vi. 4–10; iv. 8, 9, 16–18), that sound like leaping bugle-calls from one in the front, are just it, — this aged doctrine about struggle. Half the chapters of Epictetus are battle-music on this one theme. But because each one has to find out for himself how true the doctrine is, and has to find it out a great

many times before the faith becomes as much a part of him as it is good to have it, let us draw it out, and say it over once again.

How do we treat our difficulties? That is the question that has no second. It stands all by itself in its importance. The answer to it gives our destiny. How do we treat our difficulties? Do we take their maiming only, or do we win their blessing too? The question that has no second.

Difficult*ies*, not difficulty. They are many, and of different kinds, although their hurt in essence is the same, and their gift in essence is the same.

I. First of all rises up that difficulty known as the *Inherited Burden*. You probably have one. A dull brain perhaps, or some weak organ in your body, or the outlaw-passion in your temperament, the brute in the family blood that ought to have been tamed by our grandfathers. We will not complain; but who would not have made himself a little brighter, had his opinion been asked at the right time? How many of us who are forty years old but have ached in the same spot where their mothers ached, and because they did, and have been able from that ache to predict afar off which of the wheels of life would probably be the one to stop first, and to stop all the rest? And who can help sometimes charging the hardness of his life-struggle, or his failure in the struggle, to those two persons in the world whom he loves dearest?

We will not complain, I say; but it is getting easier every day to complain weakly of this burden, and yield to it in miserable self-surrender, because we are just finding out, by the help of the doctors and physiologists and the new philosophy of organic nature, how much we may in perfect honesty attribute to it. Our old dogma said that we inherited our sin, and that all our woe was brought into the world with that garden sin in Eden; and this dogma

was a dim hint of the great fact recognized by the evolution doctrine of to-day. But, after all, the Gardener was so far off we could not practically reach him to lay our personal responsibility off upon his shoulders. But to-day we are learning to see right in our homes our Adam and our Eve, who have actually inlaid our body, mind, and tastes with their bequests! And, as this knowledge grows, weak hearts are likely enough to abate their trying, because (they say to themselves), "*He* and *she* are to blame, not I." And a first effect of our evolution knowledge may be to make more cowards and renegades in life.

Weak hearts and renegades, indeed! As if the knowledge did not teach this rather, — that, if in any way the responsibility be less, the *fate* is even stronger than we thought, and needs the stouter wrestle; and this, too, that, if in one way the responsibility be less, it is greatening in two other ways: (1) because, knowing the tendencies received from father and mother, we can tell what special dangers threaten us in our own natures, and therefore just what we have to guard against; and (2) because to-day we consciously transmit our influence to our children, — and men and women awake to the suffering they inflict are doubly holden for it. Yes, this new emphasis upon inheritance, truly taken, is both comforting and spurring. Comforting, for to those who mourn overmuch at what they see in their little ones, thinking it is all their personal bequest, — to them it says: "No, you are only responsible for the half or the quarter part of this: your *whole ancestry* has been counted into you, and through you reaches yours." That thought is comfort sometimes, when your boy turns out badly, or your daughter dies young after suffering six years. And the new knowledge spurs, because it says to parents: "You *are* responsible for the quarter or the half part of your children's fate; and *you know* that by patient energy your dull brain can be quickened somewhat, your weak body can strengthen its weak

aces somewhat, and specially your unbalanced tempera-
ent can be controlled and trained and much ennobled,
d that, if you make these self-improvements, they may
largely handed on to *them*." That we are not fit to
ve our children, unless we have trained ourselves be-
rehand for their birth, — that is what our evolution doc-
ine says to us ; and, thereby, it will gradually become a
eat salvation and uplifting to the race.

The earnest wrestler, knowing this, will never wholly
rrender to the poorness of his brain or his body or his
mperament. Not to poorness of the brain ; for that
ll head that we inherit may go with days that shall
ave us perfect in self-respect, although dull-headed. No
ght is more impressive than that of humble self-respect-
g workers, boys or girls, or men or women, who, day
, day out, do their duty in the quiet stations where
nall talent hides them, representing the Moral Law In-
rnate in their little corner. Not to the poorness of one's
ody ; for what sight more beautiful than the patience,
e self-forgetfulness, the wide and eager pity for others'
ouble, which suffering sometimes generates in the life-
ng sufferer who bears her weakness greatly, though in
l other ways the service has to be service of those who
nnot even "stand," but have to lie, "and wait"? Who
s not heard of some mighty invalid who found sphere
d mission-field on her sick-bed ?

No, not even to the poorness of one's temperament will
e earnest wrestler yield. There is one example in the
orld more touching and inspiring than these last. It
that of a man wrestling hard with his inherited burden
hen it takes the form of a Besetting Sin, — which is
ry apt to be that brute in the family blood. But, even
it be a devil of his own wanton raising, we watch him,
e cheer him, we tell him we know all about it, and that
e 's doing nobly and helping us in our struggle : we pity
im, if he falls ; we reverence him as holy, if he wins.

Let such a struggler know that *we* know he is the hardest fighter of us all.

And, if he wins, his besetting temptation actually turns into his guardian angel, and blesses him through life. The besetting sin may become the guardian angel! Let us dare to say it! Let us thank God that we can say it. Yes, this sin that has sent me weary-hearted to bed and desperate in heart to morning work, that has made my plans miscarry until I am a coward, that cuts me off from prayer, that robs the sky of blueness, and the earth of springtime, and the air of freshness, and human faces of friendliness, — this blasting sin that perhaps has made my bed in hell for me so long, — *this can be conquered.* I do not say annihilated, but, better than that, *conquered,* captured, and transfigured into a *friend:* so that I at last shall say, "My temptation has become my strength! for to the very fight with it I owe my force." We can treat it as the old Romans treated the barbarians on their frontiers, — turn the border-ruffians within ourselves into border-guards.

Am I speaking too confidently? But men have done this very thing, and why may not you and I? Who has not his besetting sin to be transfigured thus? But it will take the firmest will we have, the clearest aim, the steadiest purpose. It must be for the most part a lonely Jacob struggle. The night will certainly seem long. And yet, in our clinch, the day may dawn before we think of it, and we shall have won the benediction and earned the name of "Israel, Prince with God," and learned that even besetting temptation may be "God's Face," — but that *wrestling,* and *wrestling only,* is the condition of such blessing.

II. These are forms of that main difficulty called "Inherited Burden." There are others close akin, called by the general name "*Hard Lot.*" "Hard Lot," — again the very name is a challenge to our sleeping powers. The hard lot called Poverty, Ignorance, Narrow Conditions,

Accidents, is waiting to give us — after the struggle — Temperance, Diligence, Fortitude, Concentration. But *after the struggle*, — that is, as we wrestle with those conditions, these elemental powers are waked in us and slowly trained, and at last are left ours, — our instruments by which to carve out life's success and happiness.

A boy in the town has no chance for education like the boys of richer fathers in the neighborhood, — no college, no high school even; or maybe the yearning for education has come too late, after the school-days are over. Will the boy, like Theodore Parker, the farmer's son in Lexington, turn the pasture huckleberries into a Latin Dictionary? or like Chambers, the great Edinburgh publisher, will he learn his French and science in the lonely attic, after the fourteen hours' work at the shop are done? Will he, like Professor Tyndall, rise every morning, for fifteen years, and be at his books by five o'clock? A girl, in the town, seeks for a "one-thing-to-do" to save herself from a frittered life. Harder yet it is for her than for the boy, for social custom is against her. Will she be daring, and not only daring, but persistent? The history of achievement is usually the history of self-made men and self-made women; and almost invariably it is the history of *tasks*, if not imposed by the hard lot of circumstance, then self-imposed. The story of genius even, so far as it can be told at all, is the story of persistent industry in the face of obstacles; and some of the standard geniuses, a Newton, a Michael Angelo, give us their word for it that genius is little more than industry. A woman like "George Eliot" laughs at the idea of writing her novels by inspiration. "Genius," President Dwight used to tell the boys at Yale, "is the power of making efforts."

A man sees some great wrong in the land. No money, no friends, little culture, are his. He hesitates, knows not what to do; but the wrong is *there*, it burns in him till somehow he finds a voice to cry against it. At first, only

a faint sound, heard by a few who ridicule, and one or two who say Amen. And from that beginning, through the ridicule and violence, "in necessities and distresses, in labors and watchings and fastings," he goes on, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things," till men are persuaded and confounded, and the wrong is trampled down and the victory is his! Such things have been done within our knowledge. At Philadelphia, a few years ago, they celebrated an anti-slavery anniversary, at which gray-headed men met to talk over their morning battle-fields in one such cause. What a lesson of faith those aged abolitionists have taught the nation, — faith that a relentless wrestler can win blessing from the Hard Lot and the Untoward Circumstance!

III. A third well-known fighter waits in the dark to throw us: he bears the name *Our Failures*. How well we know him! What a prince of disheartenment he is! What arguments he has to prove to our minds that trying is no more of any use! He is our arch-devil. And he, too, — yes, because he is arch-devil, — he, too, will be our arch-angel, if we will have it so, — will be the one who warns and guides and saves. Half, two-thirds, of our best experience in life is his gift.

Look along any path of life at the stateliest figures walking in it. They are, most of them, figures of men that have *failed more than once*. Yes, any path. "It is very well," said Fox, the great English orator, "very well for a young man to distinguish himself by a brilliant first speech. He may go on, or he may be satisfied. Show me a young man who has *not* succeeded at first, and *has yet gone on*, and I will back *him*." Every one has heard of Disraeli, England's late Prime Minister, sitting down writhing under the shouts of laughter with which his dandy first speech was received in Parliament. "I have begun several times many things, and have succeeded in

them at last," he said. "I will sit down now, but the time will come when you *will hear me*." And it did come to even a dandy, who could "begin many times." John Quincy Adams's Diary was published not very long ago. It is strange to find him as a young man lamenting his absolute inability to speak extempore. An ineradicable difficulty, — constitutional, he thinks; — and he died known as "the old man eloquent." These happen, all of them, to be the words of orators; but success in all lines of life is reached, or not reached — is lost, — by exactly the same principle. Whatever the high aim be, "strait is the gate and narrow the way" which leads to success in it. The great chemist thanked God that he was *not* a skilful manipulator, because his failures had led him to his best discoveries. The famous sculptor, after finishing a great work, went about sad. "What is the matter?" asked his friend. "Because for once I have satisfied my ideal, and have nothing left to work toward." He wanted to fail just a little! Said a successful architect of the young men in his office, who kept copying his designs, "Why *do* they do the things they *can* do? why *don't* they do the things they *can't*?" Miss Alcott wrote and burnt, and burnt and wrote, until, at last, her "Little Men and Women" came out of the fire. By the failure in art, by the failure in science, by the failure in business, by the failure in character, *if we wrestle on*, we win salvation. But all depends upon that *if*. Our failures pave the road to ruin or to success. "We can rise by stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things," or those dead selves can be the stones of stumbling over which we trip to destruction.

IV. Again, have you ever known what it is to wrestle with a *Wrong* done you, — a wrong so bitter, perhaps, that the thought brings shadows on the face and seems to be a drop of poison in the heart? And have we learnt from it, as many have, what Paul's "Charity" chapter means,

what inward sweetness forgiveness has, how we can almost bless our injurer for the *good he has done us* in thus teaching us to know our weakness, and bringing out our better nature to conquer that baser? "It is royal to do well and hear one's self evil spoken of," said an old sage. Royal, yes; but blessed, to be able to have that feeling toward the evil speaker which is not contempt, and is not pride, and is not wholly pity even, but real and living friendliness welling up through our wound toward him by whom the wound was made.

V. Have you never wrestled with *Religious Doubts?* Sometimes, not the bottom of our knowledge only, but the very bottom of our faith in goodness, seems to give out. Perhaps some fearful tragedy has happened. Death or pain on its mighty scale has stalked abroad; or some great sin is triumphant, and the dishonest man, the mean man, the selfish man, is exalted, while goodness has to hide its head, and it seems as if it were madness to talk about the Eternal Righteousness. Perhaps our own life's disappointments have soured our hearts and blurred our eyes, till the brightest scene of pleasantness would wear November grays, and we say, "It is always winter, and never spring, to us." Perhaps dear old ideas, round which our gratitude and reverence have twined, are in decay, as new light breaks in from undreamed-of realms of thought; from an evolution theory, upsetting and resetting all our history of providence; from a theory of mechanism in mind and morals, which seems at first glance to turn ourselves into physical automata, and to dim all hope of a life beyond the body; from a vision of Law, Law, Law, till we see no room in the universe for a Law-giver, no place in our experience for singing songs and looking gladly upward. And then, if you have felt these doubts and wrestled with them, not bidding them go, not letting them go, but holding on to them, and thinking deeper, reading farther, looking more patiently and less dogmati-

cally, — above all, living more purely and unselfishly, — have you not found the chaos turning, at least by patches, into cosmos, as the brown fields of April take on their green? Have you not caught here and there a vision, which, for the moment, made the old peace come again? Have you not found that life, the greater bringer of mysteries, was somehow also the great solver of mysteries? If not *you*, many a man *has* thus "beaten his music out" from the solid arguments of despair; has known what it is to pass from drifting doubts, not into certainties, but into a trust that has to be spelled with capitals, if printed, and can tell its meaning best, not by any explanation, but by cheer and serenity and a feeling as of awed triumph in life and in death!

VI. Once more. *Death:* have you ever wrestled with that death-sorrow till you knew its inner sweetness? Sweetness greater than all, I would almost say. The loss is loss. We say, perhaps, "It is *their* gain," and wish to be willing; but we are not willing. Our hurt gets no relief. The days go by, and the emptiness is as empty, and the silence as silent, and the ache as relentless in its pain. What shall we do? Our friends look on, and wish that they could help us. And they know that help will come, because to their own wrestling it once came. They know that the heart of this pain is joy indeed. And if you asked how it came about, in distress so very sore as yours, their differing words will probably amount to this: that such pain can be stilled in one way only, and that is by being *more actively unselfed*, by doing more for others through one's sadness, and trying hard to do simply right. It takes a wrestle, yes; but they will assure us, as a simple inward fact, whose chemistry they do not pretend to understand, that the inner rewards of helpfulness and duty done at such a time deepen and sweeten into something that almost seems a new experience from its exceeding peace. It is not time making us forget, — nay, just the

opposite: we feel that this new peace is somehow vitally connected with that pain; and, at last, we come to think of them and feel them together. And, then, we begin to call it peace, and forget that it was pain; and, by and by, the hour in memory which is our lingering-place for quiet, happy thoughts, is the very one which is lighted by a dead friend's face. It is our heaven-spot; and, like the fair city of the Apocalypse, it hath no need of sun, for the glory of that face doth lighten it. Perhaps, as life goes by, there will be more than one of these green pastures with still waters, in our inner life. And this we shall then find out, — that each death-sorrow is itself unique. From a brother's or a father's loss one can but dimly understand, I suppose, a mother's feeling when her child has vanished. And this is comfort, — each death is so unique because each life and love has been unique. No two deaths will bless us just alike, and we can still name our new strength or our new trust from the separate love: it is still "Katie's" gift, or it is "Father's" gift. And, thus, the very highest and deepest and holiest of our experiences in some way wear the likeness of those friends that we have lost.

It is only another instance of the correlation of Pain with Gain, — through struggle; the correlation of difficulty with exaltation, — through wrestling: through the struggle, through the wrestle, through our will facing the hard thing, clinching it, never letting go, until we feel the gladness crowning us. We speak of the "ministry" of sin, of suffering, of disappointment, of sorrow, and truly speak thus; but none of these "minister," not one, until they have been mastered. First our mastery, then their ministry. We say, "The Lord hath chastened us:" yes, but by summoning us to a wrestle in which it is our part never to let go! It is not the mere difficulty that exalts. None of these six or seven things that I have spoken of, neither the Inheritance, nor the Temptation, nor the Hard

Lot, nor the Failure, nor the Injury, nor the Doubt, nor the Death, suffices by itself to crown us. They may just as likely crush or warp or embitter us. They do crush very many ; and, if they do not crush or embitter you and me, it is because we have used our wills against them. They only gave the opportunity, and we decide whether it be opportunity for bondage and maiming, or for the blessing and the new name "Israel." All depends on us.

On us, — but only, after all, as all things which we do depend on us. On us, because the Powers which are not ourselves work jointly with us. Not what we cannot do only, — as making roses, earthquakes, solar systems, — but all that we can do also, — breathing, eating, thinking, — confesses that Power. And as in every heart-beat the universal forces of chemistry come into play, as in every footstep the universal force of gravitation lays hold of us to keep us poised, as in every common sight and sound the universal forces of light and laws of undulation are invoked, as in all ways physical we only live and move and have our being in virtue of that which is not we, — so is it with these still more secret, not less real, experiences. Surely, not less real are these inward correlations, this moral chemistry, by which, at the working of a man's will, pain is changed into patience, pity, cheer, temptation into safeguard, bitter into sweet feelings, weakness into strength, and sorrow into happier peace at last. Are these facts one whit less real than the facts of the body's growth ? A thousand hours of struggle in every year attest these facts for each one separately. Here also, as in the body's breathing and digestion, a Great Life joins on to our little life, maintaining it. It is we and the Not-We with us. Call it by what name we will, we depend, and can depend, on an Infinite Helpfulness in all our trying. The success we seek may fail for many reasons; but I feel sure that Eternal Powers adopt every right endeavor, or rather that every right endeavor plays into Eternal Pow-

ers of Right, and is thereby furthered toward that success which will really most bless you or me as triers. If angels do not rejoice over us repenting and bear us up, as the Bible says, it is because the Very Present Help that bears us up has a greater name than "angel," and is nearer than the heavens.

No, *not* on us *alone* does all depend, — because, — because we never are alone! I suspect that, followed to its deepest source, our faith in the Goodness of the universe will be found breaking out from some such private experience, solitary in each one, but sure to come to each one that will have it, — that inward blessing follows pain and struggle.

But it helps our faith to trace in others also this — law of transfiguration, shall I call it? And if we wish such help, whom shall we look at? Two classes. First, the "self-made men," as they are styled, because from hard materials they have forged their own success. They are our models of courage and persistence, of diligence and fortitude and temperance, of force and concentration. By these signs they have conquered. We all recognize their victory, and gladly do them reverence. Their epitaphs might read, "These men by wrestling accomplished all they undertook."

But more reverently yet I look upon another class, — the men who have tried as faithfully, and from the hard materials have not won great success, that we can see, — the women who have worked, and never dreamed of gaining special victory. Perhaps what they have lacked is some needful element of force; but, quite possibly, all they have lacked is — a little selfishness. The world knows little of them. They count among the common lives, possibly even among the failures. Emphatically, they do *not* accomplish all they undertake. Only the few who are nearest know their striving, and how truly the striving has crowned their brows. They themselves are

not aware of coronation. They only know that they have tried from day to day, and never seemed to do the day's whole duty, and that life has brought many hard problems; but that now the problems are getting solved, and that it is quite possible to be happy, and yet have failed. They are very humble usually, with an air of wistfulness in their eyes and in their talk, as of men who have been comforted by aspiration, not attainment. They have learnt to hope that

> "All instincts immature,
> All purposes unsure,
> All I can never be,
> All men ignore in me,—
> This I am worth to God!"

They have learned to *hope* that. They have learned that they will never do great things. Still, if any great thing is to be done, specially any burden to be borne, you will find them already there at work when you have made up your mind to go. They are great common-helpers. They think they know nothing, and they are truly not geniuses; yet bright people in straits have a habit of coming to them for advice. Not rich, yet men and women whose practical aid in trouble is counted on without the asking. They are rare friends, because their minds are so rich with life's experience, their hearts so sweet with it. They can speak the fitting word to us in our self-building, because the scaffolding was long ago taken down which built that same part of themselves; and they remember all about the difficulty. They are better to meet than a poem by Browning, or even that letter of Paul or the chapter in Epictetus, because here we meet the hero-force itself in delicate original.

I passed a woman in the street one day, and passed on, for she did not see me. But why not speak? I thought. So back I turned; and, besides the greeting, she dropped on me four sentences, such as we go to Emerson to read,

— made me for the time four thoughts richer in three minutes. They were life distilled in words, — her life distilled, — though she was one who told me she had "died" long before, she seemed to herself, of late years, to do and be so little. Perhaps she had died, and this was her immortality; for only the wings were wanting on the old shoulders. She had been an humble struggler; and, as I saw her, she seemed to wear a crown, and the name "Israel."

I will sum it up. Here is all my sermon, and in another woman's words. She calls her poem "Treasures."

Let me count my treasures,
All my soul holds dear,
Given me by dark spirits
Whom I used to fear.

Through long days of anguish
And sad nights did Pain
Forge my shield, Endurance,
Bright and free from stain.

Doubt, in misty caverns,
Mid dark horrors, sought,
Till my peerless jewel,
Faith, to me she brought.

Sorrow, that I wearied
Should remain so long,
Wreathed my starry glory,
The bright crown of Song.

Strife, that racked my spirit
Without hope or rest,
Left the blooming flower,
Patience, on my breast.

Suffering, that I dreaded,
Ignorant of her charms,
Laid the fair child, Pity,
Smiling in my arms.

So I count my treasures,
Stored in days long past;
And I thank the givers
Whom I know at last.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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[No. 45]

THE GOSPEL THAT JESUS TAUGHT

BY

REV. CHARLES A. ALLEN

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE GOSPEL THAT JESUS TAUGHT.

By Rev. Charles A. Allen.

"Deep below, as high above,
Sweeps the circle of God's Love."

Surely there is no better way of learning what the Christian gospel really is, than to study the life and words of Jesus, and inquire what principles of religion he taught.

To understand the first and most important of these principles, we must remember the religious state of his people at that time. A false notion of religion had burdened men with intense anxieties. It made them think that, unless they performed certain rites with scrupulous care, they would incur God's wrath. In this way religion became a mere superstition. The religious truth, therefore, that his people *most needed to be taught*, was this: that God does not care for any forms, except as they really express our love and trust towards Him, and really help us to become more religious in spirit; that reliance on ceremonies is not true religion, but mere magic: and that the best *expression* of religion, the true worship and service of God, (and so too, we may say, the true "confession of Christ,") is helping our fellow men and living worthy lives (Jas. i. 27). — or, in other words, we must prove that we are religious by our *real goodness*, and not by any ceremony.

"Not such the service the benignant Father
Requireth at His earthly children's hands;
Not the poor offering of vain rites, but rather
The simple duty man from man demands."

This, then, is the *first* principle of Christ's gospel, the principle that he often taught from the very beginning of his ministry, more frequently, indeed, than any other, just because it was to him the most important principle of religion; namely, that *true religion is simple and spiritual;* that it is not a ceremony, but *a right spirit;* that it is love to God and man, bearing fruit in humility, sincerity, purity justice, self-denial

and trust. (Matt. v. 3–12; vi. 1–18, 22; vii. 21–27; ix. 13–17; xii. 1–14; xv. 1–20; xxii. 34–40; John iv. 23) And Paul, too, taught this principle as the doctrine of "justification by faith" (Gal. ii. 12–16).

Then there is a *second* principle which Jesus often taught, namely, that *God is love*, even to those who do not love Him (Matt. v. 44–48): that, therefore, we and all men are in this sense His children and can always trust Him as our Heavenly Father, who, even when we are suffering most keenly the punishment of our sins, is really loving us and trying to save us: and that, whenever we truly repent, He immediately forgives us, like the father of the prodigal in the parable, though we may still suffer severely (Matt. vi. 14, 15; Luke xv. 20; xvii. 4).

A *third* principle is, that God is not far away in the skies, but is *always with us*, a sympathizing and helpful Presence (Acts xvii. 27; Matt. vi. 25–34).

Still other truths of religion were taught by Jesus: but these were *the central truths* of his teaching: these were his gospel, or "good news." And how eagerly the people flocked to hear it! It was "glad tidings" indeed. For the Pharisees had laid heavy burdens of ceremonies upon the people; and the people were weary of these burdens, which, as Peter afterwards said, "neither they nor their fathers were able to bear" (Acts xv. 10) Their religion was superstitious, and therefore made them wretched. But by teaching how *simple* and *spiritual* true religion is, and how *tender* and *near* is God's fatherly love, Jesus offered the privilege of deliverance from all this superstition and fear (Rom. viii. 15), — the deliverance which Paul afterwards described as "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. v. 1). Deliverance from sin he also offered, indeed, by the life-giving power of his revelation of God's love; but deliverance from superstition was what the people *needed first*.

Has even the Christian Church yet really comprehended this gospel that Jesus taught?

If, for instance, it really understood what Jesus said about God's love for all souls (Matt. v. 44–48; Luke xv. 4), would it still believe that any soul can be forever lost?

Consider, too, how the very first principle of his gospel is still denied. Most Christian pulpits still teach that baptism, for instance is essential, and that the unbaptized are somehow

out of favor with God. This may be Jewish, but surely it is *not Christian*. It is, in principle, precisely what Jesus condemned. It is true that he accepted baptism from John, who was a Jewish reformer; he wished both to honor the ministry of John, and to express his sympathy with the general confession by the people of penitence for national sins. And also, at one time, when John was still preaching and baptizing, Jesus permitted his own disciples to baptize (John iii. 22, 23; iv. 1, 2) But *subsequently*, during his ministry, we *never* hear of the rite being administered *by any one*. Evidently the people ceased to ask for it, when they saw how little the Teacher valued it; for Jesus himself never administered it, nor required it. Probably he would not refuse it; but he evidently regarded it as unessential, as belonging to the dispensation of the Baptist, rather than to "the kingdom of God," that is, Christianity. In the Sermon on the Mount and in his detailed directions to the Twelve Apostles and to the Seventy Evangelists (Matt. x.; Luke x.), he says nothing about it, — surely *a strange omission*, if baptism be really as important as the Church has usually made it. And, further, John foretold of Jesus that he should baptize, not with water, as John had baptized, but "with the Holy Spirit" (Matt. iii. 11). This baptism with the Spirit, therefore, this inbreathing of a new and holier life, must be the *only essential* Christian baptism. This must be the meaning of the command to "baptize all nations," in the last verses of Matthew; — or else we must believe that, as is quite probable, these verses were the addition of a later age, like the similar command in the last verses of Mark, which the Revised Version regards as doubtful; — for to suppose that Jesus, in this *only* instance, insisted on a ceremony of any kind as essential, contradicts the first principle of his gospel, as it was taught both by him and by Paul (1 Cor. i. 17). We rightly reverence the ordinance of baptism, as Paul reverenced this ordinance and that of circumcision, when spiritually used to express religious dedication, and not superstitiously insisted on as necessary for obtaining God's favor; but to assert, as many churches do to-day, that no one can be a Christian unless he has been baptized, or to *insist* upon *any* ceremony, such as fasting, or the Lord's Supper, or religious profession, is, *in principle*, precisely what Paul denounced as "perverting the gospel of Christ" (Gal. i. 7; v. 6; vi. 15).

Then there is the confusion of faith with belief, — another superstition, which often perplexes good people They cannot honestly believe certain dogmas, such as that of the Trinity; and yet they have been taught that "faith" includes a belief in these dogmas, and that God requires this belief, no matter whether it is honest or not. Thus these dogmas encourage dishonesty, and mystify religion. They complicate and confuse what is really very simple. They become to-day precisely what the ceremonies of Judaism were in Christ's time, namely, a needless burden to the conscience, for they burden men with anxieties which have nothing to do with true religion.

But to all who are thus perplexed Christ comes with his gospel, dispelling the darkness and lifting the burdens. True religion, he says, is a very plain matter: the youngest child who has learned to obey and to trust its earthly parents can understand it. God has often "revealed it unto babes" (Matt. xi. 25), when the "wise and prudent" have passed it by, looking for metaphysical dogmas and "deep" theologies.

The Sermon on the Mount, and especially the Beatitudes, tell us what Jesus taught as true religion. It is simply repenting of sin and receiving the forgiveness of our sin, as we forgive those who trespass against us (Matt. vi. 14), — trying to live better to-morrow than to-day, because we "hunger and thirst after righteousness," — being sincere and unselfish, just, merciful and pure, or, in other words, *really good*, — and then, in the spirit of a little child, *trusting all* to the Heavenly Father who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies (Matt. vi. 25–34).

This life of *filial* obedience and trust, "the spirit of adoption" (Rom. viii. 15), is the true religion, the true "faith," the essential Christianity, which Jesus taught in his gospel.

"Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord!
What may thy service be?
Not creed, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee."

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AN endeavor, "with the help of many eminent scholars, to write a book which shall contribute something to a rational understanding of the human greatness of Jesus in the minds of those who have not the time or opportunity to read those voluminous writings in which the modern study of the life of Jesus has embodied its conjectures and results." The sources of information concerning Jesus and the general place and time of his career are carefully and fully examined, followed by a consideration of his youth and training, the development of his character and work. Subsequent chapters deal with Jesus as Prophet and Messiah, and finally with the questions of resurrection and deification. In simple, direct language, the grandeur of Jesus' humanity is here portrayed with warm sympathy and rare insight.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 46]

THE MAIN LINES OF RELIGION

AS HELD BY

UNITARIANS.

BY

REV. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

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THE MAIN LINES OF RELIGION AS HELD BY UNITARIANS.

I WANT to give a simple statement of religion as it is commonly held by Unitarians. Everybody knows something of it. People have a vague, general idea that Unitarianism differs considerably from the belief of most other churches, and they are perhaps more or less familiar with the Unitarian way of treating this or that point. But it may be interesting if I try to give a sort of bird's-eye view of the whole subject.

Of course I cannot do this either authoritatively or very precisely. I cannot set forth any authoritative "Statement of Faith," because we do not have any. Perhaps it would be more convenient if we had. It would be a convenience to have some neat little pocket-creed that we could produce at once, when any one asks, "What is Unitarianism?" But then we do not think religion to be a subject that can be treated in this fashion. These great thoughts which so intensely hold humanity, — God, and immortality, and duty, and the marvellous influence of Christ, — these are not ideas that can be set down in little formal propositions, and learned off like the multiplication table. Our cardinal position on the whole subject, is, to keep an open, reverent, thoughtful mind; to recognize that these are subjects on which, if men do think, there are sure to be differences of thought; and to leave free play for such differences

of thought, not to cramp them by setting up formulas to which all must agree. Of course, with such freedom there is a great variety of religious opinion among us. I have never been in a Unitarian congregation yet, in which there was not almost every shade of belief, from some who are not sure whether they believe anything, to others who are almost on the border-line of Orthodoxy. So some, when asked, "What is Unitarianism?" simply point to the New Testament: "That is our only creed," they say. A terser description was that of an old friend of mine, who used to say, "Unitarianism, sir, means, one God, and twenty shillings in the pound!" And not a bad creed either, as times go. Outsiders, indeed, fancy that with such varieties of opinion, and no fixed standard, there cannot be any real union among us; that we must be merely a rope of sand. But it is not so. The fact is, our churches hold together about as heartily as any. Our general sympathy on a few great religious truths, and in this broad practical way of looking at the subject, really holds us together quite as well as any profession of doctrinal agreement.

It is these few great religious truths, — the main lines of our religious faith, — which I have to describe the best I can. I shall not, however, shape them out just in the usual way. The common order in religious statements is, to speak first of "God," then of "Christ," then of "the atonement," "heaven and hell," "the Bible," and so forth. That is the old technical, scholastic order. But it always seems to me like beginning at the far-away circumference of things. I think the natural order, in this great reaching-out of religious thought, is, to begin at the small, near, human end. So I might almost say that religion, as Unitarians hold it, begins with *Man*. It may not seem much to begin a religious statement

with, "We believe in Man;" and yet in reality this carries a great deal with it. Is not this, really, where Christ wanted men to let their religion begin? "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" He was always teaching men to do their duty, man to man; to show love, man to man. He appealed to men's own common-sense: "Why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?" Along the line of human relations he led them up to Divine relations, — through man's fatherhood to the Infinite Fatherhood. Indeed, is it not true that the very thing most needed in the present day is, for the Churches to come back to a hearty, wholesome belief in man and manhood, in man's duty, and man's reason and conscience? I think they are doing this. Our Orthodox friends are finding out that human nature is not so utterly broken down and incapable as they used to make out. The old doctrine of the whole race being fallen and lost is not held as strongly as it used to be, even by those who still keep the old statements of it. But I think I may say that we Unitarians do not hold it at all. We stand utterly clear of it. We take man as he is; and it seems to us that, as in the case of the rest of God's creation, this must be about what the power that caused him to be, contemplated: that man is not so much fallen, as only slowly rising; not off the track of the Creator's purpose, but in it, though not so far along it as he might be. Sinful? Yes, but by no means all sinful; with original *goodness* in him as well as "original sin," — a goodness which we find in heathens and unconverted folk, and which is surely not worthless in God's sight, but is real goodness before him. So we regard the world's various religions, not as mere misguiding deceits, but as all real upward strivings of

human thought, — feeling after God. Thus the *Salvation* that man needs is not some divine substitution by which his punishment may be borne for him, but all the divine and human influence by which each one may be delivered from all that keeps him down, and helped upwards and onwards. This is what I mean by "believing in man." As it has been well said, "No man can think too highly of his nature, or too lowly of himself." That is about where we are, and along the line of this conviction lies the whole of religious faith.

Why, the very first thing we are led to, along this line of belief in man, is the very highest thing of all, — *faith in God.* I might almost say that we believe in God because we believe in man. Because, looking at man in all lands and ages, we find, ever coming out, this sense of mighty Divine Life in the universe; we find it ever growing up into systems of faith and worship, ever stirring man with the very strongest emotions he is capable of, ever lifting him up and helping him on. We find humanity blossoming into worship as universally and naturally as the plants blossom into flowers. And so, because we believe in the plant, we believe in the flower. It could not be that man's development, so grand and orderly, should, when it comes to its highest point, in religion, deflect from reality to a blunder and a delusion. It cannot be that that which most has stirred man is an unreality; that that which has most helped man is a fiction or a dream. So we believe in God, — in that mighty, inscrutable Life which is back of all things. And we believe in the *Unity* of this mighty Life; we are *Unit*arians. Here comes in what I may claim, I think, as one of the leading characteristics of Unitarianism, — our dislike to and distrust of all fine definitions and speculative distinctions. A great

part of the theology of the past consisted of the various efforts which men made to think out and define the inner mysteries of this mighty Divine Life. That was the real significance of the old-world polytheisms; each idol form of Neptune or Apollo, each god-name of Brahm or Amun-Rá, was the attempt to bring out in sharp, clear outline some fancied distinction in the dimly discerned Deity. Against all of these stood out that little Jewish race with the sublime protest of their prophet leaders, — "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord;" or, as the English Jews render it, still more emphatically, — "The Eternal, our God, the Eternal is one." It was only the same tendency, a little modified, which, when Christianity came in contact with these same polytheisms, elaborated Christ's simple thought of one God into the mystic Trinity, in which the "Father" was only one person out of three. That whole mediæval doctrine of the Trinity was a mere "darkening of counsel by words without knowledge." We point to Christ's thought of God, simply as the Heavenly Father, — "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." We take with great delight and thankfulness those names he taught us to speak of him by, — "Our Heavenly Father," and the "Holy Spirit;" but these were not theological terms by which he was defining mysterious distinctions in the Godhead, but simply the great loving names by which he helped men to reach out in their thought to that close, infinite, gracious Presence. We stop where Christ did, — "One God, our Heavenly Father."

Having thus stated the belief commonly held among Unitarians about man and about God, we are naturally led to a third step. *These two, the human and the Divine, are in contact and communication.* This almost follows

as a matter of course. Could it be supposed that there should be these two intelligences in the universe, — the Divine and the human, and the human constantly impelled by its very nature to be seeking communion with the Divine, — and yet that the two should be forever and absolutely apart? What the exact nature of the communion between God and the soul is, one cannot dogmatize about. "Does our worship really reach the heart of the Infinite God?" people ask. I do not believe there is a little bird's happy song that does not reach the Infinite heart; and how can we help believing that our worship does? I do not know *how*, and I do not know how His spirit touches and influences our life. Why, we do not know how our spirits touch and influence each other! These are subjects of infinite wonder; but I think Unitarians universally do strongly feel that there is such contact and communion between God and man, and that it somehow becomes clearer and intenser by purity of heart and by earnest seeking.

Now this belief in the contact between man and God opens out into a whole series of religious questions. *Prayer* is one of these questions; *Inspiration* is another; the *Bible* as the records of inspiration is a third; and *Christ* as the highest point of this divine and human contact is yet a fourth. "What do Unitarians hold about *Prayer?*" I am often asked. "Do you think that it can change God's plan, or arrest his laws, or procure any outward good?" No; I do not think Unitarians generally have much idea of that kind. Such things as praying for rain or for fine weather have almost passed away among us. The sense of the solemn order of God's laws, and of its being a blessed, beneficent thing for them to be so permanent and unchangeable, has taken away almost the very desire to ask for such things But this has not

done away with prayer. On the contrary, I think it has lifted it up, spiritualized it. It is simple communion of the heart with God; the seeking to

> "Touch God's right hand in the darkness,
> And be lifted up and strengthened;"

and in that seeking we receive divine influences that are infinitely nobler than any mere outward gifts.

From this follows the true idea of *Inspiration.* It is simply a higher grade of this contact and communication between the Divine and the human. The old mechanical theory of inspiration — that God dictated certain things to his prophets, which they wrote down, without any choice or possibility of error — is almost passed away. But it has passed away to make way not for a smaller, poorer idea, but for a nobler, purer, higher one. God's spirit works in the human soul in many ways and many degrees, and sometimes with an inflowing of light and truth which makes those so inspired, not indeed infallible, — "When God makes the prophet, he does not unmake the man," — but still, very real revealers of Divine realities to the rest of us, whose lives are on a lower plane of experience.

This shows you the *true idea of the Bible.* In the Bible we have the scriptures of that line of holy souls among whom this inspiring influence of God has been most sought for, cherished, and believed in. Not an infallible book, not a book to be taken, all or none; a book, or rather a long line of books, in which the human and the Divine are mingled just as they were in the prophet souls it tells us of; a book that has in it many a mistake, — which we are not troubled by, — but that is all alive and aglow in its best parts with the Spirit, and which brings out, and brings together, like no other scriptures

in the world, that slowly developed thought of the Almighty Mind which He has revealed in his purest and holiest children. And do you not see how this larger idea of inspiration finds room for all that is noblest in the other religions of the world? Men used to think — some think so still — that everything inside the Bible is inspired, and nothing anywhere else. But that will not hold. What! Shall we call Solomon "inspired," and deny any real light from God in such great leaders of the higher life as Zoroaster, Socrates, Confucius? I think very few Unitarians would say that. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It lights them in different degrees, from the comfort or clearness which comes in answer to our simplest prayers, up through all high discerning of God's truth, up through the lofty visions of prophets, and coming to its very highest point in that most wonderful life and spirit of Jesus Christ.

What, then, of *Jesus Christ?* Simply, carrying out this thought I have been dwelling on, — of how the Divine Spirit works variously in man, — in Christ we have this contact and communion at its highest, finest, divinest point. To most souls, the consciousness of God is only an occasional uplifting; to him, it was a constant and indwelling presence, something that lifted him out of self, that exalted his being with strange tides of power, that made him feel it was the Father's word he was speaking, the Father's work he was doing, till, in his deep harmony with God, he could even say: "I and my Father are one." A wonderfully high word that, and yet not one which meant that he felt himself in any sense God. Indeed, it is the glory of that sense of his close relation to God, that he felt it as something which all God's children might share, that they all might come into that

one-ness with God, that they all might become the "sons of God;" and it was the very object of his life to lead them to this. Here, in regard to Christ, is, I suppose, the subject on which there is the most variety of opinion among ourselves, and our greatest difference from other churches. The old Orthodox belief is, that this Jesus of Nazareth was Almighty God, come down to earth, living in the world a little space in the form of man. I can speak for all Unitarians when I say that we do not hold this. We do not find anything like it in the accounts of Christ's life in the Gospels. It is a life of wonderful holiness and exaltation that the Gospels tell us of; a life all aglow with the consciousness of God, — so holy, so above the common life of man, that it is hardly wonderful that when the story of it spread among heathen peoples, who were familiar with the idea of Divine incarnations and demi-gods, the thought grew up and gathered strength, "This must have been God." But this was all an after-thought. Evidently those about Jesus had no such idea. His own family had not; the disciples had not; the Jews had not. It was altogether an after-thought; and though it came of an exaggerating *reverence*, yet its real effect has been to disguise that simple yet majestic figure which lives forever in the Gospels. It has concentrated the attention of Christendom on Christ's supposed mysterious nature, rather than on his simple life and spirit and word; it has made Christianity consist in *adoring* Christ, while it does consist forever, really, in *following* him, believing in his teachings and trying to live them out.

If I am further asked, "What, however, are the Unitarian ideas about Christ?" I have frankly to say, that they are very various. A few still hold the old Arian belief that he was a sort of angelic being of miraculous birth;

some, at the other extreme, simply revere him as a great religious reformer, the product of the highest religious tendencies of a remarkable age. But I think that most of us, while distinctly regarding him as *man*, and not being able to believe those stories of miraculous birth which only two of the Gospel writers mention (and which stand upon quite a different footing to their eye-witness testimonies to his ministry), do regard him as, above all others, inspired; the man of the Spirit; the Revealer and Teacher of the things of the Spirit; lifted by the Spirit into an authoritative wisdom, and, some think, into a sacred, immeasurable power. But then, mark *why* there are these differences among us in our explanations of how Christ came to be what he was; because it is our main position that such explanations are a secondary matter. We do not lay stress on them. That this was not God, indeed, who was tempted, and prayed, and suffered and died, and that it is an impiety to worship him as God, — this seems clear to all of us; but as to *how* exactly he came to be so above all others, we lay down no doctrine, but would have each read the Gospels and judge for himself. It is not the explanation of the life, but the life itself, the life and spirit and word of Christ as they stand forever in the Gospels, — *that* is what we tie to. That is the beautiful thing to study; there it is that the great realities of God's love and truth, and man's duty and destiny, are set forth in the clearest light and upon an immovable foundation. There are other points about Christ's work in the world, such as *redemption* and *atonement*, which it might be interesting to many to explain at length. But I may sum up the whole of these in saying that we regard Christ's work as simply a great work of influence upon the human heart. We have no part whatever in that idea so

strongly insisted on by the Orthodox creeds, of Christ having died as man's *substitute;* of his sufferings on the cross having, as it were, bought mankind off from hell; of his blood being a satisfaction to the wrath or justice of God. It is not that we shade off this a little, while still using the language of it; we do not believe it at all! All that doctrine of "the Blood," as it is called, as something to "shelter behind," seems to us a shocking perversion of the beautiful work which Christ lived and died to do. God never needed any such satisfaction. He never needed any reconciling. It was to turn — to reconcile — man to God, not God to man, that Christ lived and died. His whole blessed work was simply in human hearts, then and forever, — to show them the infinite love of God waiting for their repentance; to help them to feel the awfulness of sin; to put a new striving after goodness and kindness in their hearts; to make mankind happier and better, the world the kingdom of God, and the life of earth an earnest beginning of the life eternal.

A closing word as to that *Life Eternal.* I think that just comes as the very crown and apex of this structure of faith, the lines of which I have been tracing. Believing in man not as fallen and ruined, but as a progressive being, only yet in the lower rounds of his progress; believing in God as the Infinite Life that is ever leading all things on in their beautiful development; believing in Christ as the Exemplar of what humanity has in it to become, and the Teacher of the divinest truth about life, it is impossible to help believing that man's life has a destiny beyond this mere fragment of the earthly years. So among Unitarians there is a happy, trustful feeling about the future life. Here, too, we do not pretend to lay down any special, formal Unitarian doctrine. It is a great, grand hope and trust, about the details of which

we do not profess to know; and I think we generally have a profound distrust of all detailed descriptions and mappings out of it, — all attempts to make out how many are saved, and who are lost, and how long they are going to be lost, and so forth. But the one thing which is clear to us, is, that there is no finality at the end of this life; that the destiny of human souls is not then closed up, but rather just opening. As far as hope goes, Unitarians are pretty much the same as Universalists, — *hoping* that even those who seem most lost will at last be reached by the influence of God and raised to the true and blessed life. But man must be free in the next world as in this, and so we dare not lay down any doctrine that all *will* come to the blessed life beyond; but we are sure that all *may* do. Because over all that is dim to us arches the infinite presence and power and love of God; and as we look to him we feel that we can "trust the larger hope," and say with Whittier, —

> "Father of all, thy erring child may be
> Lost to himself, but never lost to Thee."

In conclusion, I can only say, in Paul's words, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." I do not set these things forth as something which men must believe in order to be saved. There is enough in every creed to save men, if only they live by the best in it. As Dr. Channing once said, "It does not matter so much what a man believes, as how he believes it." But still, these things are important. People are everywhere thinking about them, and they want to know the truth. Especially they want to know what those think who have shown that they are not afraid to think for themselves. Now, it is a significant fact, that these churches of ours, proving all things, searching the Scriptures with perfect freedom,

investigating nature and science with perfect freedom also, have come to a solid agreement on the main lines of this broad, liberal faith which I have outlined to you, though they go different lengths along those lines. And it is another significant fact, which ought to be infinitely encouraging to us, that if we look at the freer thought and the newer statements of the other churches, — I do not say they are coming over to Unitarianism, but assuredly they are all tending to these same great, simple, trustful thoughts for which we Unitarians have so long had to bear our witness alone. And so, while we are still but seekers, not professing to have any perfect, final system, we feel that thus far we have the very faith and truth of our great Master, Christ; and we are sure that along these lines of thinking and living lies the light of God, and the strength of duty, and the progress of the world that is, and the great hope of the world that is to be.

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WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

BY

STOPFORD A. BROOKE, LL.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?"
MATTHEW xxii. 42.

THE question Jesus put in some words like these to his Apostles, when the time came in his ministry at which he resolved to take upon him the title of Messiah, is a question which I was forced very plainly to put to myself when I continued to preach after leaving the English [Episcopal] Church; and it is a question which is becoming, as it seems to me, of more and more importance for a Christian teacher to have an answer to, not only on his lips, but within his mind and heart. To say the truth, I think that the whole success of a Free Christian Ministry, and the very life in the future of the body to which we belong (so far as it confesses Christ at all), depends on our having such ideas concerning Jesus as will retain and keep around him, living and impelling, the emotions of the past; not, of course, in the same form as that into which the past threw them, but in a form which will be alive with equal, but not similar emotion.

It is incessantly said of Unitarianism and of Unitarian preaching, that it is cold, that its tendency is away rather than towards a growth of life, that it is unideal and unimpassioned.

And when I asked myself the reason of this accusation, (which, though continually repudiated, is continually re-

asserted.) I felt that it partly arose from prejudice, — our opponents assuming that no warmth of feeling could be felt towards Jesus as a man: — but also that there was some truth in it, and in this way: that Unitarians, both teachers and hearers, in a natural anxiety not to speak of Jesus in such a manner as to lead people to infer that they gave him the honor and love due to God alone, tended to push him aside by slow or swift degrees from his place in spiritual history, from his dominant personal relation to us, from his claim upon our love and faith, from his spiritual leadership of mankind; and in so doing lost all, or the greater part, of that emotion of love and reverence to him which was indeed the moving force of the career of Christianity; which (handed down to us fraught with the accumulated emotion of centuries) should increase rather than lessen in our hands, and without which our religion is not Christianity at all, but the Theism of the Prophets and the Psalms, — a noble religion, indeed, but one wholly inadequate, as it seems to me, for the universal humanity in variety of modern life.

It is to this Theism that so many among us are tending, and it is in the more or less of that tendency that the coldness complained of is found. Theism to David and Isaiah was not cold, but full of high emotion; and we can have the same emotions as they possessed. But they are emotions which do not flow out of, or engage, the passionate interests of all humanity. They do not take in the interests of modern life, — they do not belong to the court and the market, to the life of man with man and of nation with nation, to the ideas which have moved in history and in philosophy, to the hopes and ideals of mankind, — in anything like the same manner, either in kind or in degree, as the ideas of Christianity do, or the emotions which belong to those ideas.

Theism is not human in the way in which Christianity is; and it is in that fact that its lesser power to kindle emotion,

or to warm its teaching, is to be found. Without the passions which move incessantly, like glittering and intense fire, around the person of Jesus, religious teaching will not make men's hearts to so burn within them as to bring them in crowds to hear and to obey, and to be impelled to become teachers in turn.

I say these things diffidently before this audience, conscious that many will not agree with me; but I have no diffidence concerning the thing itself. Of that I am convinced. Theism is not only inadequate to the religious wants of mankind, it is also an anachronism. To go back to it alone when Christianity has been, is like choosing to be a child when one has become a man. As the child is father of the man, so is Theism the father of Christianity. But one chooses to remain a man; and Jesus was right when he said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Ever since I left the [Episcopal] Church this question has been pressed upon me more and more strongly; and I have asked myself — What was the last and first cause of the success of the preaching of St. Paul? How was it that his gospel seized on so many and diverse national characters, on men in all ranks of society and of education? and I have come to the conclusion that it was his passionate love of Jesus as his human master, and as his indwelling friend, and his power of making others thrill with the same love and faith, which did this evangelizing work.

I have been astonished, as I read with changed eyes the Epistles, to find this love to the man, not this adoration of the God, everywhere. It is the dominant note, and I have often wondered why we could not frankly take the same note, and live upon the same platform, without fear of being mistaken. If we could feel as he felt towards Jesus, and speak and teach in the same way, no one would accuse us of coldness, nor would the boldest opponent dare to call us merely Theists. And of late, as I have read the

Epistles in the Evening Services, I have said to myself. "Why not? Why not speak as St. Paul spoke? Why not feel as he felt towards Jesus?" For it is plain to me, as it is plain to all here, that St. Paul had not one touch of Trinitarianism about him; that there is not a single saying in all his writings which imputes Deity to Jesus, which mingles him up even with God's nature, which disturbs the unity of the worship we give to God alone, which even tends to replace the idea of God by the idea of Jesus. The severance between God the Father and Jesus is complete; and it is so complete that it is with absolute fearlessness of being mistaken that St. Paul speaks of his personal love of Jesus, and of his personal union with him and of his faith in him. Throughout, Jesus is a man to St. Paul, of the same nature as himself, but his Master, his Guide, his Lord in humanity.

Nor, again, is there one word in St. Paul's writings which would lead us even to infer that he was aware of the miraculous incarnation, or of the miraculous reanimation of the body of Jesus, or of any miracles wrought by him which needed powers which St. Paul did not believe were also possessed by himself and others. In all the phrases of lofty love, faith, devotion, which he uses of Jesus, there is not one which a Unitarian, who had, like myself, rejected the miraculous origin of Jesus, and with that his Deity, might not frankly use. And yet there is no doubt that many of us would object to use them, because there would not be behind them the same belief in the immanent and personal presence of Jesus as St. Paul possessed, nor the same intensity of affection, nor the same conviction that through all that Jesus was on earth — not that God was brought nigh to us — but that we were led nearer to God, and day by day draw more nigh.

I do not think we shall get back into our personal religion, or into our personal teaching, that attractive victorious element which warms and kindles and allures men,

until we add to our Theism that which makes, not the essence of Christianity, *but* its moving force, — personal devotion to Jesus as a Man, intense belief that his ideas are the roots of the Salvation of Humanity, faith in his personal life with the race and the individual, and heart-felt application of his life to the wants of the human soul and the conduct of social life.

There is no fear of love of the Father dying out, or being replaced by the love of Jesus, *if* we do this as St. Paul did it, as Jesus himself wished us to do it. On the contrary, the more we penetrate (freed from the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus, freed from the legendary miracles which support that doctrine) into the teaching of Jesus himself, and of St. Paul about Jesus, the more are we led by Jesus to the Father, and by St. Paul, through Jesus, to the Father; till tenfold more loving, more sacred, more alone in pre-eminent glory, more the only source and goal of all Righteousness and Truth and Mercy, more the solitary fount of forgiveness, and more the everlasting supporter of eternal life, *He* appears whose work Jesus came to do on earth, and into whose hands he commended his parting spirit.

The love of Jesus, then, such as St. Paul had, such as I think it would be well if we all had, in his way, — what is its true ground; what its deepest ground? It must be for us a ground which will not interfere with our love to God, and which will increase our love to Man. It must, when it takes us into communion with Jesus, at once lead us along with him, and beyond him, to the Father.

The ground most commonly dwelt upon is that we love him because he is the Revealer of the Father. And, in truth, when we think of all that he told us of the character of God, and of the way in which he lived it out for us among men, we have enough to love him for. And the one chief and beautiful truth he made clear forever, and more clear than any had dared to make it before, — that God

always loved us, even when we were his enemies, and that, therefore, he was never to be feared again, never needed propitiation, never needed to be reconciled to us, never was apart from us, save only as a perfect Father is apart from a sinful child, — a Father whose punishments are founded on sacred law, not on anger, — whose law has that Love at its root which seeks the perfection of the child, and whose Love welcomes with unspeakable joy the faintest flush of penitence, — a truth which, when believed, annihilates superstition, — ought to make him dearer, perhaps, to us than to almost any other body in the Christian Church, because it is — as a protest against the doctrine of the necessity of a vicarious atonement — one of the truths our ancestors in the faith of Unitarianism have proclaimed and clung to through years of misrepresentation and intolerance.

It were shame in us then to forget all we owe to Jesus, who thus established in the minds of men the truth of the Fatherhood of God, on a foundation which all (whether confessing Christ or not) have built on since his time. For he made it impossible for any one who followed him, and understood his meaning, not to love God; and when we cease to love *him* who did this for us, or let our love for him grow cold, or, through fear of being considered to hold doctrines which we do not hold, refrain from speaking of him as we feel, we are in danger of loving God less than we ought to do. In proportion to our emotion towards Jesus is, I think, our emotion towards the Father.

This is a lesson I have learnt from the Apostolic Epistles. It is a thought which burns inwardly through all the writings of St. Paul. And shall we lose all that emotion and all its power, because, in expressing it for ourselves, we may be accused by our opponents, as by our friends, of using words which seem to be consistent with the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus? I trow not! St. Paul used them, and we hold that St. Paul — it is our contention —

was not, any more than the other Apostles, a believer in the Godhead of Jesus.

But I do not think that the chief source of our love for Jesus arises out of what he revealed with regard to the character of God. Others, though none so much, had disclosed that character before him; many, inspired by his revelation, have revealed, since Christ's time, other parts of the mind of God; for revelation through man has never ceased, nor will cease till all men be at one with the Father.

The deepest source of our love to Jesus (and I have come to see that this was at the root of St. Paul's most passionate feeling towards his Master) *was what Jesus told us about Man*. And it is this which seems to me to be wholly concealed by the doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus, even by the doctrine that, through the indwelling of the Word, he was different in kind from us.

When I think of him as the son of Joseph and Mary, as in no miraculous way severed from us, and as in no miraculous way, but simply through yielding to the Divine Spirit that moves in all of us, reaching the heights of self-sacrifice and holiness, so that he could challenge his foes to convince him of sin, — when I think of him as conquering in his manhood all sin, and triumphing in his faith over all the forces of the world, — there is then a rush of love and joy in my heart for him as one of us, as the human Master of the soul, which has in it, mingled with every other high passion, all the emotion of Humanity. And the feeling is utterly distinct from that which I give to God the Father: and the deeper it is, the more I am capable of loving God. Loving my brother whom I have seen as perfect man, I can love God, whom I have not seen, ever more and more.

Well, if Jesus be conceived of as man, and if I believe he said and did as wholly man what we find recorded, what did he disclose to us concerning ourselves?

Why, first and foremost, that we were capable of being entirely at one with God. "I and my Father are one." "I, a man, and the Father are one." The phrase, which I do not doubt was said by Jesus, is claimed as proving his Divine nature. I claim it as the statement that he held pure human nature to be by right at one with the Divine nature. "That would surpass audacity," say the maintainers of his Deity, "that a man should say that!"

It is just that revealing audacity that Jesus had; and the truth laid down in the words is one of those which, when believed, establishes the eternal religion in the hearts of men. Once grasped, it lifts the whole of humanity into the ideal region of joy, and effort, and hope, and faith, and life. If any one of us can say, as one of us, "I and the Father are one," then we ought all to be able to say it: and the time shall come when we *shall* say it truly. It is the greatest and the most victorious revelation ever given to Man about himself. And from it follows a multitude of other truths about Man, all of which are nestling in the teaching of Jesus, all of which glow through the writings of the Apostles, though they are often limited by the narrow range of their education, — truths which are growing with the growth of the Race, and which are destined to continuous development.

The first is that Man, collective and individual, is indissolubly united to God, and can never be separated from Him, nor ever finally cease to have, and to belong to, the essential righteousness and life; so that it is equally impossible, that doctrine being true, for any man, woman, or child to become the victim of evil forever, or to pass into the nothingness of absolute death, of continued unconsciousness of life. Were such things so, a part of God would perish.

To believe, I repeat, this good news from Jesus about Man, — that Man is at one with God, — is forever to disbelieve in everlasting Hell, and forever to believe in

eternal and continued consciousness of Being, that is, in immortality.

Then, again, when we hear him claim for himself, and for all his brothers in human nature, union with the Father, and remember how well the phrase (bold as it is) suits with the earliest declaration with regard to Man, — that he was made in the image of God, — we begin to feel, in a new way, the meaning of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

That doctrine, bound up with the Godhead of Jesus, *may* reveal something about God, if that view of it be true. *But it reveals nothing about Man.*

But if Jesus meant to say, and if the apostolic writings had the same conception, that God entered into him, and wove His being through the being of His child and son, and spoke through him, revealing His own character, — a thought which *does* belong to Jesus and to the early Church, — why, then, that God should incarnate Himself in a man is a fact which is not particular to Jesus, but universal to the race; and God has always from the beginning, and is now, living in us all, speaking through us, revealing by our means phases of His manifold Being to our fellowmen; — always the Word taking flesh (to use that Oriental phrase), in more or less degree, in proportion to the education of the being into whom He enters; and revealing Himself, now in the development of intellectual truth, so that all science is the self-revelation through incarnation of the intelligence of the Father, — now in the development of beauty, so that all art is the revelation through incarnation of the essential Beauty of God, — now in spiritual power, so that all human goodness and love and ideal effort to perfection is the revelation through incarnation of the essential Spirit of purity and love; — *until* in this incessant Incarnation, in various forms and phases throughout the whole of the human race, we *do* see God in His variety, but, as long as we are imperfect, not in His entirety, — never, indeed, in that, as long

as eternity shall endure. But, nevertheless, when all Humanity is perfect, God will be incarnate in the whole body of it in the most universal way which at present we can conceive.

It is that truth (one of infinite import) which Jesus revealed about Man; and its imaginative and impelling power over the affections and the thought of men is as great as its practical effect is upon the daily life of the individual and on the progress of the whole of Humanity. Were it believed, I cannot almost conceive the change it would work upon the world. But it is growing towards belief, and the far-off future will see it as the leading conception of human life and of human history

Lastly, though I might tell of many more truths revealed by Jesus about Man, — whenever we look straight at him as man and do not confuse ourselves with any shreds of the old belief, — there is this one truth which belongs to our inner life: the sinlessness that he attained.

It is said that no man can be sinless; that therefore, if Jesus was sinless, he was God; that he claimed sinlessness, and therefore that he was God.

I maintain, on the contrary, that he did not claim to be sinless in any sense *impossible* to us his brethren; that he was born and grew up to manhood with the same nature at all points which we possess, not preternaturally perfect so that he could not do wrong, but tempted as we are and resisting temptation; that he reached his spiritual perfection as a man may reach it, through struggle against the elements of imperfection, fighting the good fight of faith and love, conquering day by day the evil, and proving in his own person that man is capable of arriving at holiness. It is his revelation, proved in experience, of the capability of men to reach a goodness which has no sin. "*Man can be sinless*" — that is what he told us about ourselves — through faith in God, and love of God. And it is a revelation which we have almost forgotten, and which has

been wholly concealed from many of us by the theories of theologians.

It means not only that the forgiveness of sins by God is assured to us, — it means much more! It means that, being forgiven, we can pass on to spiritual perfection, and that we shall do so; that we may, like Jesus, do so, even in this life; that we certainly shall arrive at it in the other. What one man did, another can, and all shall do, — till all mankind, one and all, reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. — attain the perfect Man.

I have therefore no dread of saying that Jesus reached sinlessness, lest I should be thought to say, in that, that he was God. For I believe he reached it *as* one of us, in all points tried, and in all points conquering as a man. And I believe that when he revealed that Man could be sinless, so vast a power was added to the human soul, that in the conviction of that truth many, even here on earth, have reached, as the last days of life drew near, the state in which they cannot sin, — the state we all shall reach hereafter. It was the belief of the writer of the Epistle of St. John, — "We cannot sin, because we are born of God." It is a belief that underlies all the later Epistles of St. Paul, — that in all points he could become like Jesus; and it is a belief which wants restoring to the Christian Church, though it exists in many curious forms, wrenched away from the original conception.

I am sinless, Jesus believed, in absolute yielding of my whole Being in faith and love to my Father, and in absolute love of Man. I have conquered, finished all my work: and in myself I reveal this truth of man's sinlessness to my fellow-men. They following my steps may attain my righteousness.

Can a more glorious truth be revealed to us concerning our nature? Can a more impelling, exciting, intense belief possess and drive our inward and outward life? Can there be a truth more full of that divine joy and hope for the

human race which in the mouths of prophets and poets inspires them with words and thoughts that paint the golden year, and in the lives of workers sends them forth, like warriors, to beat down evil in the world, and to carry forward the victory of God?

This is then another of the Revelations of Jesus concerning Man. They are all founded on the doctrine of his absolute humanity, and on the necessary denial of his Godhead. They are lost when we believe him to be God.

And now read St. Paul, — read the rest of the Epistles with these thoughts, — and do you marvel at the wonderful emotion that fills them towards Jesus? That emotion is the emotion of men towards a Man.

It has none of the qualities of the emotion that men feel towards God in worship. It is intensely human. It is the passionate love of servants to a Master, — of soldiers to a Captain, — of men living in and by and through the truths of one who has revealed their own powers to themselves, — of men who are convinced that their Brother is alive, and that he is in daily, impelling communion with them, — of men who look to clasping his hand hereafter in holiness, and being brought by him to God the Father.

It is this human and passionate emotion of which we all, in every church and sect, want more and more, if we would make our own lives more active, and if we would carry forward Christianity as the conquering power of the spiritual life of the world. We need to love Jesus more, and to live in him more, — to feel for him what St. Paul felt. And the grounds on which this passionate human love of him is founded I have endeavored to lay before you.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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[No. 48]

CHRISTIANITY

AS CHRIST PREACHED IT

BY

REV. BROOKE HERFORD.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

CHRISTIANITY AS CHRIST PREACHED IT.

"Our friend, our brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word, —
But simply following thee."

J. G. WHITTIER.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." — ST. JOHN vi. 68.

WHO will show us any good? Where shall we find some real light on this great subject of Religion, — some light in which our hearts may rest without being perpetually unsettled and adrift?

Am I mistaken in thinking that this is a craving widely felt at present? Men are puzzled and perplexed. Some would have us dismiss the perplexity by dismissing the whole subject. "Even if there is any reality in religion," they say, "it is a reality that is utterly unknowable. Better leave it alone altogether, and not think about it!" But, in truth, the perplexity cannot be dismissed in that way. The world and its things visible and tangible are not all; they are not even all that man has to do with. The touch of sickness, the consciousness of sin, the infinite deeps of affection, the tremulous mystery alike of life and death, — all draw man from the outward to the inward, and reawaken the old sense of something above and beyond, and the old craving for some restful light of faith. No: the answer of letting the subject alone does not satisfy; and yet neither does the old answer of the Churches.

These still tell, in creed and catechism and statement, what it is that men should believe; and every now and then they vote by large majorities that the old doctrines are unalterable; and the various points seem well backed up by the old proof-texts, which sound clear and unmistakable; yet still, when all is said, people are not satisfied. It is not that they have definitely rejected these doctrines, but that the doctrines do not touch their real doubts and questionings. They profess to give the formulas of God's nature, or detailed opinions about heaven and hell, to men who in their secret thoughts are wanting to be quite sure whether there is any God, or any life to come, at all. And, if there is, they feel that the blessed thing would be to get back to these few great realities, and rest in them, and not trouble themselves about all those matters of detail on which the Churches have been so divided.

Now, I want to set forth what I believe to be the true way out of these perplexities and doubts, the true way to this broader, simpler, more practical religion, and the way to feel that this is not merely something better, but that it is *true*, — great, beautiful truth in which we may rest and live and pray, with happy and undoubting faith. That way I believe to be, to look simply to what I have called "Christianity as Christ preached it"; — to go back, as nearly as we can, through the narratives of the Gospels, to Christ himself, as he went about among the people preaching the great realities of God and goodness and immortality, and preaching them as a "good tidings." See what he himself said, how he answered people's questions, what he urged them to believe and to do, what it was that he was constantly putting to them in his parables and beautiful, deep sayings. If all the world's long reverence for Christ is not a mistake, let us look back to the original. You know that oft-quoted saying of Chillingworth's, — "The Bible, and the Bible only, the religion of Protestants." Well, that was a grand principle for its time;

and yet I think we may bring that idea to a brighter point still, — "Christ, and Christ only, the special teacher for Christians."

I do not mean this in any narrow sense. It does not exclude any light from other sources. Paul said that Christ was "the foundation," — not all the building, not the whole of religious thought, nor the detailed answer for all religious questioning, — but *the foundation*, the strong, deep reality on which men may build, on which they may build up their living and their thinking, and be sure that they are not building on dreams or fancies. Get the light for all that building-up and feeling-out of religious thought wherever you can, — from science, from philosophy, from other religions; still, that does not alter the fact — on which all varieties of Christianity are based — that in Christ this great diffused light of religion came to its clearest brightness, to what men felt as a revelation. And my point is, that for that clearest brightness we want to look to Christ, as nearly as we can get back to him, and to Christianity as he himself preached it.

Surely, this is a principle which should be accepted by all Christians. It is no new principle, nor any sectarian or exclusive one. The thought on which it rests is one which is owned by every church in Christendom. For there is not a Church that does not own Christ as its great teacher; there is not one that does not hold its beliefs under the idea that they are really the thought of Christ. John Calvin, in all his gloomiest doctrines of some being elected to be saved, and the rest of mankind being elected to be damned, sincerely believed that he was penetrating to Christ's deeper thought, and was only systematizing it with greater clearness. Martin Luther attacked the papacy, because he believed that it was hiding Christ from men. John Wesley went forth to the hillsides and byways, because he felt that Christianity wanted preaching more as Christ had preached it. And so Channing came

out from the Orthodoxy of New England, because he believed that Orthodoxy was obscuring the simple teachings of Christ with certain things that the Master himself never taught. So that "Christianity as Christ preached it," is a great, broad principle, that all ought to approve. But then, how is it to be applied? Here is where the trouble comes in. Many of those who quite believe, in the abstract, in holding for Christ's own truth, have been accustomed to fancy that his truth shines throughout the whole Bible alike. Now, on the contrary, it is surely evident that the place to look for it is simply in the narratives of Christ's own life and teachings, and at most in a secondary degree, in the writings of his followers.

I do not think that there has ever been a more misleading idea than that which has set Christians wandering round among all the books of the Bible as if they were all on one level of inspiration and authority, so that a verse from one part is as much to be received as a verse from another. It is such a complete misunderstanding of the Bible. The Bible is not one book: it is a whole library of books. Those books were written in distant ages, by many different writers; and even those who still think that they were all inspired would hardly say that they were all equally inspired, and that the light of truth shines equally brightly and clearly in all parts. Who would say that the story of the old Canaanitish wars is as divine as the Sermon on the Mount? When the writer of Ecclesiastes says that as the beast dieth, so dieth the man, "so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast," is that to be as much to us as Christ's word, "In my Father's house are many mansions"? No: that whole idea which would put the Old Testament on a level with the New, and which holds that, if we believe in Christ, we must believe in Samson and Jonah, — that is all a blunder and a confusion. And even in the New Testament there are differences too. The light which was so bright in Christ was not quite so bright

even in his Apostles. Paul and Peter and John were holy men, men aglow with the spirit; but they were not like Christ. As Emerson says, "When God makes the prophet, he does not unmake the man." All Peter's inspiration did not keep him so true but that once Paul had to "withstand him to his face." And when Paul says, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works,"—that is not quite so high a spirit as that which said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." No: they preached the gospel with all their might; and still, if they had been asked whether they or their Master best understood the gospel and best taught it, can any one doubt what their answer would have been? And so the Epistles can never be put quite in the same place as Christ's words in the Gospels. Did you ever read what Luther wrote to Eck, who was defending the power of the Pope to define Christian truth? He said: "It is certainly impudent in any one to teach as the philosophy of Aristotle any doctrine which cannot be proved by his authority. You grant this. Well, then, all the more, it is the most impudent of all things to affirm in the Church, and among Christians, anything that Jesus Christ himself has not taught." It is true that Luther himself did not half keep to his principle, but that is no new thing in the world. The principle is good, and it is exactly the principle we Unitarians have ever pleaded for. What said the Master? Turn to the Gospels most of all. There you have the thought of Christ himself, at first hand. There is the very heart of Christianity. And I am persuaded that, if men would look at it in that way, it would be the most blessed thing for religion, and there would be no more talk of Christianity being in danger. For the differences of the sects (which have given the impression of everything being uncertain) would sink into their true minor place; while the great thoughts of Christ would not only come out with a new

simplicity, but would come to the human heart with the same divine assurance which gave them their power of old.

Here, then, is the true principle: — "Christianity as Christ preached it." And now let us see something of its application. To begin with, it has to be applied negatively. There are some things which have to be cleared away. Indeed, I believe that a great deal of what still passes for Christianity, in the common setting forth of it, will have to be laid aside when tried by this test.

I listen with wonder to the things which are held up, all around us, as the essential truths of Christianity; for they are, to a large extent, things of which Christ never spoke at all! Take, for example, the doctrine of the Trinity, — three persons in one God. Just think of the stress that has been laid upon this throughout the Christian centuries; men anathematizing each other, even slaying each other, not only for not holding it, but even for holding it in some slightly different way from that which the Church, at this period or that, had settled. There is not so much stress laid upon the Trinity to-day; but almost all Churches profess to hold it, and there is still a great deal of learning and subtlety spent upon it. It stands as one of the things which have to be defended and explained as part of Christianity. Yet how could this doctrine possibly have come to hold such a place, if men had only kept to Christ's own teachings? Why, where does he ever say anything about the Trinity? He not only does not say, — as the Athanasian Creed says, — that it is to be believed "before all things," but he never says that it is to be believed at all. He never touches such questions about the Divine nature. He *does* quote the ancient watchword of his people, — "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one."* But there he stops. All that he tried to add to that ancient faith of his people in One Almighty God

* St. Mark xii. 29 (Revised Version).

was, not mysteries about His inner being, but more of tenderness, more of love, to help men to think of Him not as a great, far-off King, but as the ever-present Spirit of life and love whom we should call "Heavenly Father."

Take the doctrine of Original Sin, or Total Depravity. The entire "scheme of salvation," as it is called, is built up upon the idea that the whole human race was ruined by Adam's fall, and that, since that, every human being has come into the world already sinful by nature and incapable of anything good. But where does Christ say anything about this? Why, here is the simple fact, that, among all the "proof-texts," as they used to be called, for this doctrine, there is not one single word of Christ's ever quoted. There is not a word from him to quote! Every word of his was against it; — not against the idea of men being sinners, but certainly against the idea of their being born sinners and incapable of anything else. Indeed, the whole appeal of his gospel was to men weak and sinful, but with some good still clinging to them, able to do better, and whom he was continually urging to do better. No: the doctrine of "total depravity" is certainly no part of "Christianity as Christ preached it."

Or take the doctrine of Endless Hell, about which there has been so much discussion of late years. I know that this has more to show for it in the apparent letter of Christ's teachings. There are many passages which, as we have been accustomed to read them in our old English version, have seemed to mean that. But some of them were strained renderings, which the revised version has put right; and all of them are the language of figure and parable, never meant to be taken literally. What Christ did was to warn men of the terrible sorrow and woe of passing on wicked and hardened into that life to come that might be such a blessing and joy. But he never closed up all doors of hope after death. If he left all that further end of the subject in mystery, it was a mystery

bounded by the Father's infinite love. That doctrine of endless, hopeless hell was the strained exaggeration of after times. Thank God, it is fast becoming no part of any thoughtful man's religion. I want men to see that it was no part of Christ's religion.

Or take the doctrine of the Atonement, as it is commonly set forth: that God could not forgive without the full penalty of sin being paid, and that Christ therefore died on the cross as our substitute, and so paid our debt and bought us off, satisfying God's justice and enabling Him to forgive. I know that many people, even in orthodox Churches, do not now hold this in that older way, as a mere substitution. I am glad of it; but that is how it is still preached by the immense majority. But could men ever have held such a shocking doctrine, if they had said to themselves, "Let us see how Christ treated this matter"? No; for there is not a word of this in his teachings. There are some passages in the Epistles which look like it at first sight, though they really mean nothing of the kind when you look closely into them. But in Christ's own teachings there is not anything that even looks like it. Always, Christ represents the Heavenly Father as simply requiring repentance, but real repentance, leading to better life. And he invites men to that repentance with such pictures of free, fatherly love as made his words a gospel of hope and mercy and encouragement.

Now is not this a most striking thing? These that I have named are called the "Peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel," and yet Christ said nothing about them! They are the very matters upon which the religious bodies most frequently preach, and yet they had no place in Christ's preaching. You know what is commonly called a "Gospel Sermon." It is one that begins with man's being ruined by the Fall; goes on to show that God, because of his justice, could not forgive; paints the hopeless state of man, unable to do anything to help himself; then brings

in the remedy of Christ's substitution; and winds up with appealing to sinners, not to work out their own salvation, but simply to accept this ready-made salvation bought and paid for for them. Nay, it is well if it does not even warn them against trying to do anything on their own part. That is what is called a "Gospel Sermon." But whose gospel? Did Christ ever preach anything like this? I cannot find it. Indeed, when I look at the kind of sermon Christ did preach, and how totally he left out everything of this kind, I sometimes fear that, if he came again, preaching only what he preached before, there is hardly a religious denomination that would admit him to its ministry or give him a ticket of membership to its communion.

But I do not want to speak merely of what Christ did not preach, but of what he did preach. I want to set forth once again, with all the earnestness and power I have, the simple gospel which Jesus Christ went about trying to persuade men to receive, and which he sealed at last with his blood, — the gospel of happy, trustful love toward God, and practical righteousness among men. Surely, the very heart of it all was his sense of the fatherly love of God, and of the blessedness of living in his love as his trustful and faithful children. "The Kingdom of God," — that was his watchword: it came to him from the great national hope of his people, who had been long looking for some great outward change of deliverance and glory. He showed them that the kingdom of God was *at hand*, in their own hearts and lives, if they would only receive it: the world full of God, — God in the beauty of the lily and the care of the sparrow, in the good thoughts that come to the pure in heart, and the strength that upholds the weak and suffering. This present blessing, of life in the love of God, — this is the good tidings he goes about preaching; and by and by, when great multitudes come about him, he gives the first great proclamation of

the new life in the "Sermon on the Mount." What is it all about? Blessings on the pure in heart, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers; exhortations to a higher righteousness than that of forms and ceremonies; brotherly kindness, and charity, and patience, put in a new and more beautiful light; encouragements to prayer, and to quiet, happy trust in the Heavenly Father's love; all coming to a point in that closing parable of the wise man who "built his house upon the rock," and the foolish man who "built his house upon the sand." That Sermon on the Mount was the great proclamation of his good tidings. It is the very charter of practical religion. It has stood ever since, and stands still, at the head of the religious utterances of the world. But there is not a word in it, from beginning to end, of all those doctrines which have been most insisted on in the creeds and articles of the Churches.

But perhaps Christ unfolded something more than this simple gospel of God's love and man's duty in his subsequent preaching. Follow him in thought as he goes to and fro among the people, with his great yearning love for them in his heart: often not knowing in the morning where he would lay his head at night; gathering the people together, answering their doubts, rebuking their sins, pointing their faith to God, and trying to persuade them to believe in this present blessedness of the kingdom of God in the heart. But no: his teachings are everywhere the same. Very little that could be called theology; nothing abstruse, no sharp lines of doctrinal definition. It is a few great thoughts and principles put in ever new lights, pressed home in different ways. A great deal about God's fatherly love, little or nothing about believing just thus or so concerning him. A great deal about repentance, and bringing forth the practical "fruits" of repentance, nothing about God's justice requiring any other satisfaction. A very great deal about loving one's fellow creatures, and

being just and kind and helpful. Sometimes stern warnings against selfishness and hypocrisy (the one class of whom Christ seemed to have most horror was the hypocrites), warnings reaching on into the life beyond, and sometimes, when he had to speak to hardened men, very stern and awful; but still, over all, the infinite fatherly love, and the "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Oh, it is wonderful! Such a bright light of religion, such a strong reassurance to man of its reality and certainty, but with no attempt at outlining, or definition, or minute mapping out of divine and eternal things; just the great Heavenly Father, the right heart turned toward him, the light of duty and helpfulness among men, and the great restful heaven for God's true children, — this is Christianity as Christ preached it.

Friends, alike of our Unitarian Church and of any other Churches who may read this, I earnestly commend this way of looking at Christianity to you. It is the way in which the Unitarian Churches have always looked at it, and yet it is not any "ism" of ours which we set up against the "isms" of others. There is nothing special or new in it. These great thoughts of faith and hope and righteousness, the Christianity of Christ, are in all the Churches. The only difference is that, in most Churches, these have been explained and defined, and the explanations and definitions have been put in the foreground; and the simple faith and trust have been treated as if they were worth little. We look to Christ, and we feel that the simple faith and trust are *all*, and strongest when not attempted to be shaped into exact doctrines. Have faith in God, and never mind trying to define his nature or his decrees. Strive against sin, and let alone the old attempts to explain just how it entered in. Follow Christ with loving reverence, even though you cannot settle all about his person. Look on hopefully to the great heavenly world, sure that even its woes and hells must work the loving

purposes of God. Here is the broader faith which in all Churches is more and more becoming the religion of thoughtful men, — so much so, that, while I began by quoting the beautiful lines of the Quaker poet, Whittier, as I look for some closing words to express this same broader faith, I can find none better than those of the Catholic, Father Faber: —

"There 's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea,
There 's a kindness in his justice
Which is more than liberty.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

"But we make his love too narrow
By false limits of our own,
And we magnify his strictness
With a zeal he will not own.

"If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

VIEWS OF RELIGION

By Theodore Parker

Size, 6 x 8 1-2; pages, 466; price, $1.00 *net;* postage, 19 cents.

"A LIVING book, which will stimulate thought, kindle aspiration, quicken languid powers of devotion, and strengthen men in their belief in God, in their love of humanity, and in their hope of eternal life." The selections have been confined to Parker's religious affirmations, in which the warmth of heart and the devoutness of spirit of the man are best revealed. The charm of his vivid and imaginative style clothes the richness of his suggestive and penetrating thought with added beauty, beneath all of which are seen and felt the preacher's passion for humanity and its needs, and the longing to make the power of God a living force in human lives. Here are revealed the inner spiritual nature of the man, his loyalty to truth, his kindly and affectionate disposition, his devotion to his fellow-men.

WEST ROXBURY SERMONS

By Theodore Parker

Size, 5 1-4 x 7; pages, 258; price, 75 cents *net;* postage, 9 cents.

A VOLUME made up from unpublished manuscripts of sermons delivered in West Roxbury, Mass., from 1837 to 1848. This is the period in Parker's life which has not been covered in his other publications, and which was therefore known only by those in personal relations with him in his parish. This book possesses value, therefore, not only in dealing with themes of perennial interest which have a direct relation to life and character, but also in throwing light upon Parker's mental and religious development, as indicated in his early sermons. Discourses on doctrinal subjects are omitted, since these were wrought out with greater power in subsequent years. Here "he does not appear so much as the reformer or controversialist, but as the preacher in a suburban parish, breaking the bread of life to his congregation from week to week." Samuel J. Barrows has an admirable introduction, and F. B. Sanborn has contributed a brief biographical sketch.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of..... ..dollars.

[No. 49]

A WORD WITH THE PEW;

OR,

HELPING THE MINISTER.

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test, and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

A WORD WITH THE PEW;

OR, HELPING THE MINISTER.

The pew in these modern days is quite ready with its advice to the minister; quite ready to tell him what his shortcomings and failures are, how he ought to preach, how long he ought to make his sermon, how he ought to treat his theme, what the objects should be at which he should constantly aim, — quite ready, in short, to point out his faults and failings, and tell him how the work ought to be done. But, generally, so far as my experience is valuable, the pulpit is quite conscious of all these things before being told of them, and is only anxious to find something more helpful than fault-finding, more efficient than ordinary good advice. And if somebody in the pew would only take the work out of his hands, and do it better, he would be thankful. If somebody in the pew would only take his place and illustrate how it ought to be done, he would listen with a great deal of gratitude, and would try to follow the example just so far as his ability would allow.

But there are some things wherein the pew itself needs to be instructed as to the attitude that it should maintain toward the pulpit, as to how it may help the minister in the various departments of his thought, his life, his work, so as to make efficient that which he so poorly and lamely attempts.

In order, then, to lead the way to a consideration of some of these things, I wish to recur to the true ideal of a church. The church, according to my thought of it, is not by any means a lecture association. It is not a place where you are simply to go to hear what the minister will have to say, and then go away and forget all about it in the days that follow. If you have paid your pew rent promptly, filled your place on Sunday morning, listened attentively, — providing the minister has been interesting enough to hold your attention, — you have not then done that which seems to me the most important thing, in order to fulfil the ideal of the true church. The minister is not the one who is to perform all the work, to "do all the religion" for the society. The pews are to help in all this, for a church is simply a mutual association for help in the ethical and religious life; and, as the ethical and religious life touches every department of human thought and human endeavor, the family, business, society, politics, government, science, art, it is the true aim and end of the ideal church to work together in the endeavor to find out how to live. The art of life, then, is the object of the church; and, in finding out how to live, and in carrying this knowledge into practical operation, consider whether there is any special obligation resting on the minister more than on any other man in the community, whether he attends church or not. The one great end of life is to learn how to think and act amid the trials, temptations, perplexities, and difficulties of life. All the other occupations of the world are for the provision of the means to live. The church, if it accomplishes its mission, is to teach men and women how to use these means for the attainment of the ideal life. Now, it is not the minister's business to do this any more than it is yours. He is called *the* minister; but the definite article is placed before his name only by way of emphasis, and because he is set apart in a special way for the doing of

some special parts of the common work. But the work of the ministry, of service, of helping to find the true theory, and to carry out into practice this theory of life, is, or ought to be, the work equally of us all.

I propose, then, in a familiar and simple way to point out some methods by which the pews can help the pulpit in its work.

I. In the first place, consider, please, to what an extent the pew can help the pulpit in the work of preaching. The people must help the minister preach, if he is to do it effectively, if he is to accomplish any grand and noble ends by his public ministration.

1. The very first way is a plain one, but it means more to the minister than he can possibly put into words; and that is by being always in the pew whenever you expect him to be in the pulpit. You have no idea how much difference it makes to the minister whether in his preparation during the week, as he looks forward to Sunday morning, he can feel sure that the people he is thinking of and striving to be ready to meet are going to be there to meet him. How very easy it is for people to be kept away from church; and, in one aspect of the matter, I do not so much wonder. I have said so a great many times. When people are kept away from church by a stormy Sunday morning, although it be true that the same kind of storm would not keep the men from business or the ladies from attending a concert, the opera, or the theatre, they naturally say that they can hear the minister any Sunday morning; that, if they miss this particular sermon, they can hear him next Sunday, or the rest of the year. You cannot persuade them that they are meeting with the same keen loss as if they missed the other, which is once or not at all. This is true, no matter how strongly they may be attached to the minister or how highly they may estimate his services. But you have no idea how it

takes the hope and heart out of the minister when on Sunday morning he sees clouds in the sky, and knows that just the very ones he has been thinking of all the week will not be there to hear the sermon. And it makes the preaching all the harder to feel that the house will be only half full and that his work will be to little or no purpose because the people will not be there to hear. Doctor Furness used to say that on a stormy Sunday morning he found out who the elect were. What a comfort it would be to a minister, if he could be sure that all his congregation belonged to the elect, after this definition!

2. Suppose you are tired Sunday morning, and conclude that this one time you will stay at home and rest: has it ever occurred to you that the minister is tired too, and that he would like to stay at home and rest, and that you make his work so much more wearisome by staying away and letting him go through it alone? I know that a great many people have an idea, indefinite and half-expressed, that the minister does not have a great deal to do, except to preach on Sunday morning. I heard a gentleman say within a week something like this: "I work six days, and rest Sunday; you work Sunday, and rest the other six days." So thoughtless are people in regard to the real burdens that oppress a minister's heart and crush out his life! If a minister be true and faithful, he works six days as hard as any one in the pew, and on Sunday two or three times as hard as on any other day. Do not ask, then, whether you are tired or not, whether it is stormy or not, but go to church, and give him at least that help in preaching, and preaching effectively, so that he may carry on still better this work of the ministry in which he is engaged.

I think we ought at least to have reciprocity in this matter. The minister will not object to your staying at

home, if you let him stay there also. But is it not a little unfair to ask him to come, and go through the lonely service, while you are resting at home and keeping out of the storm? Is it too much to ask that the pew shall be measured by the same rule that is applied to the pulpit?

3. There is another reason why people should be in their pews every Sunday. Every minister is perfectly conscious of the fact that, when he preaches a sermon, he is unable to give full, complete, rounded treatment to any one single theme. Every sermon he preaches is a fragment. He cannot give adequate treatment to any great theme in twenty or thirty minutes, or even in an hour, if your patience will bear as much as that. Supposing you come every other Sunday or only one Sunday in three, then you only get fragments of the minister's teaching. You misunderstand him in regard to the position he holds, and perhaps feel a little questioning as to the soundness of his teaching, — not because he has not, in the course of the year, rounded out and completed any particular theme, but because you did not hear it all. You only heard the first, the middle, or the last part of it, and do not comprehend that the complete treatment required more than one Sunday. Every little while I come across some illustration of this fact.

A lady in my parish came to me last summer grieved and troubled over what she supposed had been my teaching concerning certain views of religious experience and life. She was troubled, because she felt that there was nowhere, out of humanity, any place of refuge, of hope. And she thought I had taught that! And yet I had preached the precise opposite. There were especial reasons in her case why she could not have heard me every Sunday; but, if she had done so, she would never have misunderstood me in that way.

4. There is yet another thing. I know that the minister many and many a time tries your patience with a poor sermon. But, if you knew how he tries his own patience with that same sermon, you would sympathize with him instead of blaming him. You only have to hear it; he has to make it and preach it, feeling ashamed of it all the time, yet knowing it was the best possible for him to write under the circumstances, disturbed and distracted with a thousand things, — engagements to meet, somebody sick, somebody in trouble, some one to be buried, some one to be married, some public duty to call off his attention at the critical time when he was preparing himself for the inevitable Sunday. He has to furnish the definite "tale of bricks," no matter whether he is out of straw or not, or whether he has had any time to find the straw or not, or to make the bricks of the proper consistency. I feel often like putting in a hearty plea for the minister who now and then preaches a poor sermon; for, nine times out of ten, he has probably done the very best he could. But he asks you to come and hear it, and by your sympathy and co-operation to make it a better sermon than it would otherwise be. The sympathy, the tenderness, the love, the helpfulness of the audience make at least one half of that which he says. That is why, when you see it afterwards in print, you say it is not the same. The minister is gone, the audience is gone, and you have only the cold residuum left that the type has been able to catch and retain.

5. And, then, think what it means to face the same audience every week for a year, and year after year! Let any other speaker whatever be asked to stand a similar test, and the minister need not fear the result of the trial. Take your witty, brilliant, story-telling campaign speaker, whose effort is applauded to the echo, and ask him to repeat the sensation with the same audience every week.

and how soon would his brilliancy grow dim! Apply the test to the lawyer, the public orator in the Senate or the House, or to the popular lecturer. I wonder, not that the minister is not always brilliant, but that, considering the conditions of his work and his outside distractions, he is able to maintain so high a standard of public speaking as he does. I dare to say that no other man, in any profession, meets so exacting a demand with such uniform excellence.

6. Another thing. Surround the minister in all his public work with an atmosphere of sympathy. Let him feel that you are one with him in the work in which he is engaged; that you are not standing apart as a cold critic to pick him to pieces, and find fault with what he does, but that you are touching elbows, shoulder to shoulder, that you are helping him in the things toward which he is reaching out and striving earnestly to attain. Sometimes a housekeeper has a favorite plant; and, in spite of watering and weeding and tending, it withers and dies. Why? There is some lack in the atmosphere. It reaches out its leaves and tendrils for the food that the air does not contain; and so, in spite of everything, it pines and fades away. Many a time, a minister finds himself heartless and hopeless just for the lack of this something in the air toward which he reaches out his hungry tendrils, this something that he does not find; it is nothing positive, nothing definite, just a lack of cordial, hearty sympathy. Surround him, then, with those influences that he needs, and hold him up, and stimulate him, and make him courageous and strong.

7. One thing more. Tell the minister — I am speaking for thousands of ministers all over the country, not for myself — when he helps you. I do not ask you to flatter him. Any true man has only contempt for what he knows to be flattery; and, if he be a true man, he knows whether

it be flattery or not. He does not desire that, or even praise. He only wishes that he may find out in some way whether he is accomplishing the work in which he is engaged. A merchant can look over his ledger; he can balance his books, and tell, at the end of the month or the year, whether he has been making headway or not. A farmer, after he has got his crops in and the harvests gathered, can tell at the end of the year whether he has been running behind or making advance. So in almost every occupation of the world. But how is it with the minister? In our Liberal churches, where we do not undertake to go around and pick out the saints, those who have a right to have their names on the church record, how shall we find out whether we are accomplishing the work in which we are engaged or not? I do not know any other way except by the sympathetic look, the hand-clasp, the kindly spoken word. The minister only wants to know if he helps the thinking, the living of his people; if he makes the world a little brighter, better, easier for them than it would be without the efforts which he from Sunday to Sunday makes. He does n't want you to fix your attention on the sermon, and criticise the way in which he expresses himself. He does n't care to have you tell him how fine his language is, how beautiful his rhetoric, how apt and pat a certain illustration. There is a trite illustration of what I mean. It is said that the difference between the oratory of Cicero and of Demosthenes was expressed by the difference in the ways in which the audiences of Rome and of Athens were accustomed to receive it. When Cicero finished one of his orations, the people would cry out, "What a splendid oration!" But when Demosthenes uttered one of his tremendous orations against the encroachments of the Macedonian power, which was the rival and enemy of Athens in those days, the people said not a word about Demosthenes or his

oration, but cried, "Let us go and fight Philip!" They were so full of the theme that they forgot the man, and were ready to do the thing that he desired. I do not know of any man worthy of occupying a pulpit who would not gladly give up the words of praise, if you will only say, when he gets through, "Let us go and fight Philip!" — "Let us do the thing that ought to be done."

In some such ways as this you can help the minister preach; and, unless he does have this kind of help, his preaching will be poor, weak, and vain. For no minister can preach alone, no minister can preach in an exhausted receiver. No minister can preach except as he feels inspired by those to whom he speaks, and feels lifted up and moved by the tide of enthusiasm toward a common end that both the pulpit and the pew ought to have as the object of their attainments.

II. There is another side of the minister's work in which he needs very seriously the assistance of the pew; and that is in the social work of the society.

1. Times have changed since fifty or sixty years ago. Then the minister had almost no rivals. Newspapers, if they existed, were poor and few. Magazines perhaps had no existence at all. Literature of every kind was scarce. The minister was newspaper, magazine, lecture platform, general literature, library for the town. It did not need much energy on his part to keep up with his people and to lead them on. Whatever he chose to give them from Sunday to Sunday was probably better than any intellectual food that they had received during the week; and so it came to them as something fresh, invigorating, strong. But, in these latter days, the minister must give the larger part of his time to study; and, if he is to be worthy of your attention, the great source of his power must be the pulpit. It is what he can do on Sunday morning that gauges his power, his ability, his influence.

If you can be proud of your minister on Sunday morning, if you can be stimulated, helped, lifted up, led on by him, you will pardon almost anything else, if you are wise. If you have to apologize for him then, say that he cannot preach very well, but that he is a very nice man, very pleasant to see around, and to have call; if he is not efficient in the direction of the pulpit, it will be only a little while before the people will be dissatisfied and desirous of change.

2. Now the minister is limited in this matter. He is limited as to the amount of work he can do in a social way, and is hampered in a very serious fashion. He must be ready for Sunday morning's service. He must perform public duties. He must attend funerals and weddings. There are a hundred outside things required of him. There are only a few fragments of time left him for his social duties, for getting acquainted with his people. And yet, if you think the minister has not called for a long time, that he has neglected you, just remember that he is as anxious to be acquainted with you as you are to be acquainted with him. Do what you can to help him. Meet him half-way, and a little more than half-way. If he does not recognize you on the street, stop him and speak to him, and tell him who you are. If you go to a general sociable, instead of spending all the time talking with some friend in a corner, that you already know, talk with the minister and get acquainted with him. If he forgets your name, even after he has been introduced to you, don't take offence at it. I have a perfect genius for forgetting people's names. It troubles me a good deal more than it does you. I cannot help it. I do the very best I can. But remember it is a little easier for you to keep my name in mind than for me to keep a thousand or two thousand. If I fail here, do not take it as any neglect or personal offence, but help me to remember, and meet me as often as you can in these

social ways. If you call on the minister, that is only one or two or three calls; while, if he should attempt to call on you in the same way, it would be an impossible task. Suppose any one of you should attempt to call on everybody else in this church next year. You would find you would have to neglect all other business seriously. If you were successful in one, you could not be in the other and more important aims of life. Remember, then, to meet your minister more than half-way. How can he preach to you, unless he is acquainted with you? I do not believe much in sermons adapted to all the world, but not to any state of mind in particular. It would be much like a physician writing out prescriptions for society in general instead of prescribing for a special case. Your minister needs to know you. He wants to know you. Give him credit for that. And, if he does not call this week or next, or for six months, it is because he is trying to do all the time the things that must be done, and feels impelled to do first those things that seem the *most* needful.

3. Another thing you can do. A society to be organized and compacted into a successful working organization needs not only to be acquainted with the minister, but with each other. And here let me say a word with regard to social castes, classes, grades, and conditions. An Orthodox clergyman said to me awhile ago that he found it impossible to get a general sociable of his society. They came in layers or sections. If the upper layer comes, the lower stays away; he cannot get the people to come together. Now, friends, it seems to me that, if we choose to keep up these factitious distinctions everywhere else, it is a very poor thing to keep them up in the church. Here, in the presence of the Eternal, our Father in heaven, the one God of us all, — here, at any rate, when we remember that these distinctions are so ephemeral, and that it is only the eternal part of us that is to endure,

we ought to be able to forget these things, and clasp hands as children of God and coworkers for the welfare of humanity. Here in this country, of all others, we ought to forget such petty distinctions. There are few social distinctions that are worth anything in America, yet the people constantly try to make them. There are persons who live in one part of a town who will not recognize those living in another part, although they themselves may have lived the most of their lives there. They were common people last week; this week, having become suddenly rich, they do not associate with common people. These petty, mean distinctions, — let us not have them, at any rate, in the church. If a man knows that he is a gentleman and a woman that she is a lady, you never see that gentleman or that lady anxious or troubled about lowering themselves by speaking to some one humbler than themselves. It is only the person not quite sure of his social footing who is anxious about compromising himself.

Try, then, to help your minister to weld the religious society into a social organism. Let there be a thrill of sympathy running through it making it one; so that it can act as a society together, whose business it is to help on the welfare of men and women and make the world a nobler, sweeter place to live in.

III. There is another way in which you can help the minister. I approach this with something of trepidation, but I want to speak a little about the Sunday-school.

1. Every little while we hear some one saying that it is a serious question whether there is really more than one in ten that pays for its existence, that it is really worth while to have; and this for the reason that it is thought they are managed in an inefficient way. They think they are not treated rationally, earnestly, as though they meant anything or could mean anything. And yet I do not feel like suspending the one connected with this society,

for the reason that the children are accustomed to come. If we did not furnish them one here, they would find one elsewhere, and would learn things that they would have to unlearn, things worse than the poorest that they will learn among us. Yet how can we make the Sunday-school what it ought to be? How redeem and lift it up to its true place? As it is now, if half of them were abolished, and the children would go to church instead, many think it would perhaps be better for them. I remember my own childhood. I went to both church and Sunday-school. But, so far as noble inspirations are concerned, the sentiment of devoutness, of worship, of aspiration, of a sense of being lifted up and brought into relations with the divine, I got more in the church, although I understood only a little of what the minister said. I breathed in this air of devoutness and worship and aspiration. They moulded and shaped my life, though I did not know that it was being moulded and shaped. So I got more religious life in the church than in the Sunday-school. I believe this is true of many in existence now. It is not the fault of the Sunday-school, but of the method in which it is conducted. How shall we make it better? People in the pews are ready to criticise and find fault about it; but what shall we do?

Let me give an illustration of the difficulty. I refer to a fact; but I shall use the fact in a fictitious way, because I do not wish to be regarded as personal. A father had a son in a Sunday-school last year. The child did not learn very much. There were no lessons given to be learned at home. When the teacher was through with the lesson, which was made as easy as possible, stories were told or read to the children. The father was dissatisfied. He said nothing was required of his boy, and it was hardly worth while for him to go. A few weeks after, the teacher was changed. The new one was in earnest. She gave

the boy lessons to be learned at home. Then this same parent began to find fault again. The boy was worked hard all the week in school; how could the Sunday-school expect that he would learn lessons for Sunday? it ought not to be required of him. Two complaints of an exactly opposite nature from the same source and in the same Sunday-school.

2. The trouble is the Sunday-school is not treated seriously enough by the parents. They regard it as something entertaining or amusing for the children, or as a means for getting them out of the way. Help the superintendent and teachers to make it have more meaning. Let the children know that it is treated as seriously as the day school; that something is to be done there; that something is to be taught; that it has a definite object. The children will take their tone from you on this matter. Let me talk to the child, and I can find out what father and mother think of the Sunday-school, or whether they think of it at all or not. Let it mean something at home, and half the work is done.

Then, in regard to the teachers, remember that the minister cannot create the teachers. The superintendent cannot create them. If there are good teachers for half the school, that little group cannot create teachers for the other half. I know that the average teacher in our Sunday-schools is not an ideal one. How can you expect them to be? They are volunteers. They are not paid. They are willing to take the class for the hour; but only a few are ready to work, to study, to sacrifice for it. This is the kind of teaching that we have to rely on. If we had a few paid teachers who should make it their business to be ready, we might revolutionize the whole system in six months; but we have nothing of this kind, and hence let me say this: If you do not like the teacher that has charge of your boy or girl, then come and teach yourself.

Here are persons ready to do the work for you. You cannot dismiss them if they are not satisfactory, because they are not in your pay. You cannot very well find fault with them conscientiously, because, as a general thing, they are doing the best they can. Come then yourself, if you do not like them, and make better teachers. Do you say you are too busy? I have learned one lesson in my experience in the ministry. If I have anything I want done, I never go to a person who has nothing to do. People say: "I am busy, I cannot take time to teach in Sunday-school. I want the rest on Sunday morning." If I want anything done, I always go to a busy person. Why? Because, if there are any men who have plenty of time on their hands, they are the people who are indisposed to do anything, or else are incompetent. It is the busy people that we want in the Sunday-school. If you have nothing to do outside the Sunday-school, do not come and offer your services as teachers. We do not want you. If you are very busy, because you are competent, because you are interested and earnest, come and give us a fragment of your time. You can do it as well as other busy people, if you will. Come and help us make the Sunday-school mean something, if you think it should mean anything.

IV. I want to appeal to all churches to help their minister in another department; and that is the one of our outside missionary work, the cultivation of that field which reaches beyond the limits of his own parish.

1. You know how broad this field is. There is, for example, a little struggling church down in Louisiana, or out in Nebraska, reaching out its hands to us for help. A building needs to be put up. Something demands to be done, in order that the little society may not be crippled in its home work. Then, in a great city like this, — and the same is true in smaller places, — there are the poor

that are "always with us;" and the better class of these poor people cannot be helped by the ordinary mechanism of charity. We cannot have any substitute for the tender human heart and hand in doing the most needed part of the charitable work of the world. There are people tender, sensitive, used to better things, who need not so much money as encouragement, a little help, comfort. Who shall do this? The minister cannot do it all. It must be done by the people in the pews. Then every little while there is a call for money to meet some other want, to carry some missionary operation through, to spread abroad the literature that represents the thought of the modern world, to teach, enlighten, uplift the people who sit in darkness. Money is wanted, effort is wanted, thought is wanted, time is wanted, care is wanted. Who shall give it all? Not the minister surely. He cannot furnish money; he cannot furnish time; he has not the hands, the brain, the heart, the strength to do one tenth of it all. Who shall do it? Who, if not the people in the pews?

2. There is one especial phase of this that I want to call to mind. I know that business men are accustomed to think a minister is very easily touched in a charitable way, and that he is frequently fooled and imposed upon. I am willing to confess a good deal of truth in this as pertaining to myself. I find it very hard to say "no," even when I believe in my heart that "no" is the word that ought to be uttered. It is a great deal easier to give something to an applicant and have him go away with a smile and thanks than it is to feel that you have turned him away, especially when there is a doubt as to whether it is a true case or a fraud. Now, what shall we do? People in the pews would contribute a great deal more of their money, if they knew about the case and thoroughly believed that the work ought to be done. But just here

is the point of my appeal. I had a friend, one of this parish, say to me two or three years ago, "I should be perfectly willing to give money, if I were sure that it was not going to be put into a hole in the ground; if I knew that it was going to accomplish something worth while; if it were something I was interested in and thought ought to be done." One of two things: you must trust the minister's judgment, — and it is not always infallible, — or else you yourself must be acquainted with the case. The minister would like to have your judgment. He would like to talk over this case with you. He ought to. He ought to consider the case of this church in Nebraska. He ought to consider the case of this poor woman struggling with little children about her feet to lead an honest life. The society, as a whole or through its designated committee, ought to be acquainted with this case, and so advise him to give or refrain from giving. Then the minister should stand up in the presence of his people and say: "I want help in this operation; and it is not merely my judgment, but the judgment of wise, clear-headed, practical men in earnest to accomplish the work of the kingdom of God. They have looked it over with me, and they say it ought to be done." The parish must help the minister, the pew must help the pulpit, in regard to such work as this. Now consider for a moment. Suppose there were in existence one single church in America that lived out completely the ideal that I have been trying to sketch. The minister of that church would feel his heart throb with perpetual joy and peace and hope. And the existence of one such church would be a contagion to infect all its neighbors with its wisdom, with its love, with its devout heroism, its union, enthusiasm. And so this example of goodness would become catching, infectious, and the spirit would spread all over the land.

Let us try it.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 50]

SEMI-DETACHED UNITARIANS.

BY

REV. ARTHUR M. KNAPP.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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SEMI-DETACHED UNITARIANS.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."
HEBREWS x. 25.

IF it be true, as is so often asserted, that "there is no bigot like the Unitarian bigot," it is certain that such imputation cannot to-day attach to the Unitarian attitude toward the older faiths; for never, surely, was there exhibited among us so kindly or so sympathetic a spirit toward the adherents of the popular churches; never so manifest a desire to recognize the truth underlying their doctrines; never so great a willingness to enter into their consciousness, and to try to look upon the questions of religion from their point of view.

If there lingers among us the bigot's disposition, it is more likely to be manifested to-day toward those who are growing more and more indifferent to all religious associations. It may be that we are finding it somewhat difficult to be liberal and charitable toward them. It is not so easy for us, perhaps, to enter into the consciousness of the great and growing multitude of the unchurched, or of the semi-detached.

If this be true, it is greatly to be deplored; because it is among such, and not among those who are already connected with other churches, that our special work lies, and

it is toward them that our special efforts ought to be directed. And it need hardly be said that the prime condition of success in such efforts is the entire elimination of the spirit of bigotry from our hearts, and an honest endeavor on our part to enter into the consciousness of those who are becoming indifferent to all spiritual sustenance such as the services of public worship seek to supply. Such an attempt is surely well worth making.

Let us look first, in the light of the circumstances, at the perfect legitimacy of their position of indifference toward all organized institutions of religion. We find this legitimacy, first of all, in the perfectly natural and honorable reaction from the cant, pharisaism, and superstition which unhappily are all the elements which many have ever associated with organized religion, and which in their minds have become identified and co-extensive with it. The only possible way by which such minds, and in fact any mind, can be met and answered, is by entering into its consciousness, and, so far as may be possible, feeling the heartiest sympathy with its thought, in view of the circumstances and processes by which that thought has come to be what it is. Many such have been educated and brought up in the Orthodox faith. They have been ignorant of the existence of any purer, simpler, more rational body of religious thinkers and workers. Very naturally, therefore, they come to associate with the word religion all the accretions and corruptions and absurdities and demoralizing doctrines which, one by one, reveal themselves to their growing reason and common-sense. Other things being equal, had I been educated with such a conception of religion, I can easily conceive how I could stand today where they stand.

Now what is it which such men hear and see passing under the name of religion? What have they been educated to identify with it? Let us put ourselves for the moment in

their place. They go into the churches, these keen-eyed, quick-witted observers, and they hear in many of them the appointed guardians and representatives of religion repeating, in a dull, droning, mechanical way, stereotyped words and phrases belonging to a long-past day of religious thought, which have ceased to have any real meaning to themselves or to any one else. Now, men coming from out the realities of the world call this cant; and they call it by the right name, and feel a right proper contempt for it.

Again, such men keenly note the difference between Sunday and week-day demeanor. They see many who are constant attendants at church, conspicuous for their piety, who under that cover do not scruple to swindle their creditors, drive hard bargains with the poor, and close their hearts and their pockets against every appeal for help. Men call this hypocrisy; and they call it by the right name.

Still further, from their experience of life these men, into whose consciousness we would enter, have come to appreciate the supreme importance of integrity, and of the frankness and candor which come from the possession of integrity. They love to hear a man say exactly what he thinks, and to believe that he really thinks what he says. A religion which has not the courage of its convictions can therefore make no appeal to them. To-day, in the complete revolution of thought which has taken place in the religious world, they more than suspect of insincerity the ministers of religion who still to all seeming retain their creed, while not believing a word of it; who assume to be standing upon the old foundations, when their thought and life are in fullest sympathy with the new faith. When a business man signs a note, he knows that he is to be held responsible for what he therein agrees to: he cannot shirk his responsibility by saying that when he signed he

made some mental reservations. Now, business men are coming to demand that in religion a like sacredness shall attach to the profession and subscription of creeds, and that every teacher of religion shall be held responsible for his opinions according to the plain meaning of the English language in the articles of faith to which he signs his name, or which are the acknowledged tenets of the church to which he ministers. For let the minister assert the right of mental reservation, and the man who from his experience of life knows that the business fabric could not endure for a moment on such a basis of insincerity, will not give his countenance to the church or to the religion of the minister who resorts to such means; for men have learned in other matters to call such a course as this duplicity, and they now do not hesitate to apply the name to the thing wherever they see it.

Again, these men in whose place we would put ourselves love to see fearlessness and courage, and they therefore brand as cowardice the unwillingness of many of the churches and ministers to confront the real questions of the day or the prevalent vices and follies of the time. They think they see in them a disposition to attack with violent denunciation foes either long since dead or who never come within the sound of their voices; and so they have come to look upon the pulpit as the place which Robertson called the "Coward's Castle," — the place from which a man surrounded by his friends, in the absence of his opponents, secure of favor and safe from harm, denounces some far-off enemy who differs from him.

Again, these men live mainly in the world. They meet its evils; they see its shams; they are brought face to face with its miseries, vices, and crimes; they engage in its earnest work; they are plunged in its cares and strifes; their minds are absorbed in its eager pursuits. Everything about them is intensely real. They

get to trusting very much in sound common-sense; to distrusting dreams and vain imaginations and sentimentalisms. They are grappling with the hard work of life, — overcoming physical obstacles, and clearing up the path of civilization. They want to hear of a religion that has some reference to this earnest work of theirs, — something that is as real and vital and inspiring as that. A man who has lived out in the world has seen hell there, a man whose conscience is really alive has seen hell there; he has caught some glimpses, at least, of heaven. He wants to have the realities of these visions strengthened and confirmed; and when he goes into church, and has pictured before him the purely imaginary terrors of a hell hereafter, which no one has ever seen or can pretend to know anything about, or is told of a heaven decked out for the taste of children, with nothing but flowers and music and golden harps and soul-deadening idleness, he who has been taught by the world the lessons of common sense, calls all this sentimentalism; and he calls it by the right name.

Now, if by trying honestly to enter into the consciousness of such men as are popularly deemed the enemies of religion, we discover that they do call these things by the right names, and that it is really only the cant, hypocrisy, duplicity, and sentimentalism of the church against which they contend, then the only possible way to answer them is for the church itself to identify religion with simplicity, honesty, integrity, and the realities of life. Then reason and common-sense will no longer scoff at religion.

Thus is it possible for us, instead of assuming the attitude of bigotry, to enter into heartiest sympathy with those who are experiencing the perfectly natural and legitimate reaction from the methods and preaching and teaching of the ancient church.

Far more difficult is it to be thoroughly appreciative and sympathizing, to refute wholly the charge of bigotry, in our feeling toward the semi-detached, those who are infected with mere indifferentism, and who give for their neglect of religious duties the popular excuses, — such, for example, as that the preaching is dull; that the singing is poor; that body and mind are wearied by business duties and cares, and need perfect rest on Sunday; that home has prior claims; and that many other means of enlightenment besides the church are now available, and ought to be used.

Now, the only way by which we can sympathize with all who make these superficial excuses is to go down beneath the excuses, and get at the real cause of the prevailing indifference, — which cause we shall find, after all, is the perfectly legitimate one of *lack of motive*. For the excuses themselves there is no shadow of foundation. Most of them existed a half-century ago in as full force as now, and yet the churches were full. Read, if you can, the sermons of fifty years ago, and, comparing preachers of the same standing, see if you can match them for dulness now; and yet the churches were full. Recall the music of the time, — you perhaps have heard it, and can judge for yourselves; and yet the churches were full, many of them with refined, sensitive people of cultivated tastes. Business cares and household anxieties were then comparatively as great and as engrossing as now; and men and women felt as wearied when Saturday night came as they do now; yet they never dreamed of forsaking the assembling of themselves together on the Sabbath. Again, if distrust of the sincerity of ministers were a controlling cause of absenteeism, why is it that the occupant of many a pulpit which is absolutely free to-day preaches to a beggarly array of empty pews? If there are many other channels of enlightenment and instruction now open, what one is there whose claims upon popular attention can com-

pare with that which appeals to the religious nature and seeks to acquaint man with the realities of his higher life? And, finally, to the plea that Sunday is the home day, and ought to be spent around the domestic fireside, and not in religious dissipation, the answer is, that the single hour which the church now asks is certainly no material encroachment upon the time, and can in no way interfere with, but only enhance, the joys of domestic life.

Indeed, it requires but a single consideration to show that all the reasons popularly assigned are superficial. The secret of the whole matter lies simply in this: men will go nowhere, do nothing, to-day without a motive. Take away the real motive for habitual church-going, and although here and there an opera-singer in the choir, or a rhapsodist at the altar, or a low comedian in the pulpit, may attract a roving crowd, the people will not go to church, but will either invent flimsy excuses for staying at home or bravely acknowledge the lack of motive, and say that they do not see why they should go. But give them a real motive, — persuade them that there is something in this habit of church-going which is of infinite importance to their lives, — and the stormiest of Sundays, the dullest of preaching, the most execrable music, the utmost weariness of body or of mind, will not suffice to keep them from the house of worship and prayer.

Such a motive was once given to all Christians; upon such a motive has the outward prosperity of the sects been built; and upon the continuance of a motive of like force in the popular mind must they look for present and future triumphs. The old motive was found in the church idea, that the chief business of this world is to prepare for the next; and that the church itself is the ordained means of salvation for the next world, — the only gateway of heaven, the only door of escape from hell. Let this idea be entertained, let this claim be allowed, the tide of

humanity will flow toward this channel, and the churches will be thronged; but let this idea be invalidated, or let it for any reason lose its power over the religious mind, and the tide will set the other way, and the places of worship will be deserted.

Accordingly we find, as we might expect, that that great branch of the Christian church which is the most logical, which holds up this motive pure and simple, and will admit no diminution of its authority and power, is the most certain of a thronged and constant attendance. Catholicism, based as it is upon authority, will for years and perhaps centuries to come continue with success to hold before the multitude this tremendous motive, and can therefore reckon upon a more or less faithful and devoted following.

The sects of Protestantism, on the other hand, based as their religion is upon the right of private judgment, must inevitably, as they appeal to the thinking multitude, give up all pretensions to be the exclusive gateways of heaven, cease to ring the changes upon the fear of hell and hope of heaven, and offer some nobler motive for assemblage under their teachings, or they will inevitably lose their hold upon the popular heart, and see their cherished institutions of religion deserted and falling into decay. The Protestant Church should now realize that it stands face to face, not with the spirit of ignorance and superstition, but with a spirit which its own teaching has evoked, — with the spirit of earnest inquiry, with the spirit of practical devotion, with the spirit of manly and womanly intelligence. While the church-bells are ringing out the ancient invitation to worship, and the doors of the sanctuary are flung open, this true spirit of to-day makes no flimsy excuses for disobeying the summons; it pleads no Sunday headache, no weariness, no engrossing cares, as its reasons for non-attendance. It looks straight into the

faces of the anointed representatives of the church who assume to arraign it for neglect of duty, and searchingly asks, "Why should I go to church? Upon what *ground* is it a duty? Give me an adequate motive, if you want my presence there. Your future hell, from which you would try to save me, is to me the emptiest of threats; and if it were not, the realities of the hells around me and in my own soul demand all my care. The poor, narrow, selfish heaven of which you claim to be the door has no attractions for me. The present heaven of light and love, in which I can, by simple faithfulness, daily and hourly dwell, is more real and more beautiful to me than any which you can paint in the future. Why should I go to church? Nay, it is not for you to arraign me for neglect of duty: it is for you to answer my question; the burden of proof is upon you. Why should I go to church?"

Now, admitting the absolute justice of this demand, and putting ourselves in the place of those who make it, let us ask ourselves what honest and earnest and straightforward answer we can give to their question, according to the simple dictates of common-sense. Waiving all claims or motives to which the least suspicion of superstition might attach, let us ask what is the reasonable ground of obligation for those whom we call to-day the semi-detached — for those who are becoming impatient of what were once called their Sunday duties — to continue to sustain and encourage by their presence the organized public worship of God. Or, in other words, what are the motives by which, instead of that used so logically by the Roman Church, we of the Liberal fold can appeal to the intelligence and conscience of to-day for loyalty to the church idea and to the institutions of a rational, sensible religious faith? And to this demand we make answer, first, by stating, as we conceive it, the ground of our obligation reverently and religiously to observe the Sunday as a day of

spiritual rest and refreshment, a day of freedom from toil and care. We no longer observe a fiat Sunday; we no longer deem the day sacred because it was appointed by arbitrary command of God: we deem it sacred because it has survived to us from out the life and the struggle of the past, and thus has proved itself worthy of observance and honor, precious in the sight of God and man. It stands to us to-day as the divinest gift of the weary ages toiling for the redemption of man from the dominion of his lower nature. It is a day rescued by the devoted care and by the better instincts of all mankind from the sordidness of toil, and made the time of noble opportunity. It is a day guarded through the ages by the unceasing vigilance of man's spiritual instincts, and kept for us to be filled with every refining and uplifting influence which can come to our souls. It is a whole day out of each week — a seventh part of our lives — redeemed, by the spiritual energies of man, from the cares of earth to the joys of heaven.

And now the question comes to each one of us, What are we doing to keep sacred this day which has thus been given as the most precious heritage of the past? What are we rendering in return for this glorious gift of the ages unto us? Is it, can it be, to us a mere relic of past superstition? And is the observance of it to be discontinued through our indifference or our contempt? I repeat, it is a day won by the spirit of man for the spirit of man, and it is committed to our hands for our keeping. Are we to receive the gift, and then be false to the obligations it entails upon us? As we have been reminded, it may seem to us a small matter that, in the consciousness of the freedom with which we are now blessed, we assert our right to do whatever we please on Sunday. We have such a right; but we have no right to be false to our obligation to keep the Sunday sacred from toil and care. It has been won for us for the joys of heaven on earth; and anything which we

may deliberately or carelessly do to impair its value or lessen its sacredness is an offence against humanity, convicting us of the rankest ingratitude. Make it as joyful as you will, and you cannot make it too glad to typify its blessing; but to sneer at its observance as a superstition, to neglect its royal opportunities, to turn its hours from the service of the higher to that of the lower life, or needlessly to give it over again to the dominion of that toil from which it has been so nobly rescued, — that you cannot do so long as the sense of obligation is alive within you. For what, it has been well asked, will be ultimately the effect of your recreancy to this obligation? If you do nothing to keep the day, this man will go to his business and that man will go to his business, the cares and toils and pettinesses of the week will creep in, and at last the seventh day — the day of rest, God's blessing on weary workers — will be gone. It will be gone, and it will be your fault. It will have survived from the struggle of the past to perish by your hand. Think, then. It is no fiat Sunday which you are asked to observe. It is the voice of all humanity, as well as the voice of God, which is saying to you, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."

Now, precisely the same is the basis of our obligation to support, cherish, and strengthen the church. That also is an instance of the survival of the fittest; that also remains to us as the outcome and result of a far deeper conflict through the ages and in the heart of man.

Our Roman Catholic brethren, in their arguments with us, lay down as their main premise the assertion that God must have meant to give a church, a spiritual home, to mankind; and then they try to prove that theirs is the church intended. But we can believe in no fiat church, any more than we can believe in a fiat Sunday or fiat dollar. We can believe in no institution which is merely the result of an arbitrary command of the Almighty. We believe in a church

far more sacred in its origin, — a church which was indeed given by God, but given in the only way in which it could be made intrinsically precious, — given by the struggles and strivings of man. We believe in the church which is the outcome and result of the spiritual energies of the human soul prolonged through the centuries.

This church in which we stand, — this privilege of coming together here and unitedly raising our hearts and our voices to God, — why has it survived? It has been won for us by the upward-striving spirit of humanity. It has been won for us by the slow and toilsome steps of past generations. It has grown for us through the care of devoted minds and souls out of superstition and ignorance, out of the narrow confines of dogma and priestly rite, into the light and gladness of our present worship, — the worship, we would fain believe, in spirit and in truth. It has come to us out of the unutterable agonies of the myriads who have suffered and died for this simple privilege of public worship. It is not, therefore, a relic of the superstition of the past: it is the result, the culminating result and triumph, of the mightiest power in the world, — the spiritual energy of man: it is, like the Sabbath, but in an even higher sense, the gift of the ages to us.

Now, again, the question comes home to every one of us, — the question of obligation. — What are we doing to preserve and to hand on to future generations this precious heritage of the past? And for many of us the answer is, Nothing. Nay, worse than nothing; we are receiving the gift with indifference or with contempt. Think of it! Weary ages have brought us to the point where we now are, — where every man can stand up before God and speak out the best thing that God sends him. Weary ages have given us at last a free pulpit. Weary ages have brought us through persecution and through the day of mere toleration onward to this glad time of respect for all

honest and earnest thought upon the great problems of life. And now that the longing dream of humanity has found its fulfilment, — now that the heavenward strivings of the soul have wrested from the grasp of superstition a home where, in the simplicity of children, we may seek and find our God, in the reason, in the heart, and in the conscience, with nought to molest or to make afraid, — what, in the name of gratitude, what, in the name of common honesty, are we doing? We are coldly doubting the value of the church as an institution and as a help; we are indifferent to its claims upon us; we are willing to let all for which the highest thought and the most devoted care and the deepest energies of man have toiled and striven and suffered come with us to nought. This is our answer to the cry of the ages; this our return for the blessing which God through man has in all generations been preparing for us; this our contemptuous rejection of the precious gift of freedom to worship God!

Nor is even this, broad as it is, the whole basis of our obligation to sustain a rational church upon the simple ground of the claims of humanity upon us. The grand obligation is our duty to our neighbor.

We all know that apart from our religious belief, nay, even in the absolute lack of technical religious faith, we find our highest life in mutual service. When we are ourselves we love to help one another. We rejoice in rendering those kindly courtesies which make life beautiful by their reminders of the bond of brotherhood which unites us. Now did you ever think when on account of a cloud seen in the sky, or upon some other flimsy pretext, you have decided to stay at home from church, — did you ever think of the lack of courtesy and kindliness that your decision involved? Granted that you can worship God alone: nevertheless, it is *public* worship upon which many a brother soul depends for the maintenance of his spiritual

life, for the strength and cheer and guidance of his heart: and from public worship, from its power and impulse, you by your absence remove an essential feature and factor. If you have ever felt the thrill which has passed through a great assembly, — the thrill of reverence, of awe, of praise, of earnest conviction of truth, of high resolve for duty; if you have ever been thus uplifted and strengthened for the work of your life in this wondrous communion with each other; if you have felt the flame leap from other hearts to yours in this pulsing tide of feeling which passes from soul to soul, and which can never be found in selfish solitude, — then may you realize, though you may be conscious of no good coming to your own soul, the great kindness you are doing your neighbor by simply giving to him in his hour of worship your presence — its mighty aid, its mysterious atmosphere, and its uplifting and sustaining strength — in his efforts to reach out after God.

If, therefore, I am asked, Why go to church? I boldly give the old answer: To save your soul, — to save it from this sin of ingratitude for the gifts of the past, this sin of selfishness toward your neighbor. Go to church to save your soul, not from the flames of the next world, but for the grateful and sympathetic service of humanity in this world. Ay, go to church, I still repeat, to save your soul; for you cannot save it alone. Save it by having it filled and thrilled with the uplifting power which can come only from a common worship with your brothers, — from a sense of sympathy with them in a common hope, a common longing, a common aspiration. Here or hereafter you can go to no heaven alone; and you can know no real heaven in your own soul until by your personal presence, by your thoughtful sympathy, and your reverent worship, you have helped others in their endeavors to reach out after God.

[No. 51]

THE

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES

BY

REV. EDWARD E. HALE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity: and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES.

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." — EPHESIANS iv. 3.

WE are God's children, not merely his creatures. That is, we inherit something of God's nature; in the Bible phrase, we are partakers of the divine nature. When we feel and own this, we know that we are of the same nature with other men and women. We are drawn to them and they to us in unity of the spirit.

In every-day life we see some people who feel this, and like to feel it, and some who do not want to feel it. Some people like to draw together, to act with others and to agree with others. Other people hate to agree. They take you up on the first word where discussion is possible. They do not listen to the end of the sentence. Such men never form partnerships; or if they do, they quarrel with their partners and dissolve. They do not join in societies. They do not subscribe to contributions. Such a man never crosses the street to speak to a friend. Indeed, he does not know what the word "friend" means. He might be a partaker of the divine nature, but he does not choose to be. He chooses to live apart from his fellow-men.

A similar type of men, not living in absolute loneliness, separate in groups from others. They are partisans, sectarians. The type of these men are the separatists in

Scripture, whom our Bible calls Pharisees. "We are holier than thou," — this was their motto. "This people, which knoweth not the law, is cursed," — that is their theory. "Rule or ruin," — that is their plan.

Paul had tried this plan very thoroughly. He was well sick of it. He had worked through, and come out upon the great Christian theory, which is that God is Father of us all, that we have all something of the divine spirit. There is, therefore, a unity of the spirit, which we can all preserve, and in which we may live and move and have our being as one. It is with this hope that Paul writes so largely in this text, and begs them all to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

This idea of unity of the spirit is at the bottom of all our modern systems of toleration in religion. Jew and Gentile, Quaker, Episcopalian, Methodist, Romanist, and Greek, — all, in our time, share equally before the law. They may quarrel in their weekly newspapers, but the State does not care. The State acts as Gallio did. The State says: "You must keep the peace so far that every man may worship as he pleases. You must keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." So far has Christianity triumphed in law. For this is the Christian principle.

It was first asserted in political combinations, in the kingdom of Hungary, as late as the year 1563. After hateful discord between different religious parties, in which Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Socinians were all engaged, the three Protestant bodies agreed on a basis of union. This secured to all denominations, or to all persons, freedom of religion, whatever their belief. For a while the Protestants held by each other in standing for this toleration. Because they were thus united, and were also agreed in maintaining unity, or the unity of religion,

they were called "Uniti" or "Unitarii." It is in this union for toleration to all, that the word "Unitarian" first came into existence.

In that particular case the Lutherans and Calvinists, so soon as they came into power, gave up the decree of toleration. The Socinians only — the party which, in controversies about Jesus Christ, held that he was the Son of God, but not God himself — were the only body which held to the "Unitarian" position. The name "Unitarian" thus attached itself especially to them; and, by gradual dispersion from Hungary through Europe, it now designates the religious body to which we belong. It is in this first struggle for toleration that the word has its honorable origin.

The word is itself so good a word, it refers to a truth so great, and is in its origin so honorable, that our title to it has been seriously challenged. Thus I find in the English "Church Dictionary" of Archdeacon Hook, a most estimable clergyman of the English Church of our time, representing in that Church the old-fashioned Anglican view, or what is familiarly called in England "the high and dry division," that he gives this definition of "UNITARIANS:" "A title which certain heretics, who do not worship the true God, assume most unfairly, to convey the impression that those who worship the one and only God do not hold the doctrine of the Divine Unity. Christians worship the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity." Thus Dr. Hook would be glad to have the Church of England known to be a Unitarian Church. But Dr. Hook is certainly mistaken in saying that the Unitarians have "assumed" this name. The earliest account of the historical origin of the word seems to be that which I have given. The doctrine known as the doctrine of Unitarians is, indeed,

as old as the time of the Apostles; but the name came, as almost all names come, without anybody's previous device. Just as the names "Methodist" and "Quaker" and "Episcopalian" have attached themselves to different branches of the Church, the name "Unitarian" has attached itself to our branch of the Church. We could not help it, if we would. Fortunately, we would not help it, if we could. Simply, it is ours to remember that the name which the world likes to give to us stands for as great a reality as the oneness of God, and the consequent oneness of man, who is the child of God. It follows from our very position that we ought to be the last people in the world to cavil about names. Our central statement being that all men are children of God, — the statement of the divinity of human nature, — we are, of all believers, those who should be most shy of partisanship or of sect, which is to say, of Phariseeism.

All the same, however, Unitarians exist, and have a religious life parted as far as the poles from the religious life of people who believe in sect and rely on dogma. I have sometimes found myself in correspondence or in conversation with persons relying on creeds, and as sure of their doctrine as the high-priest Caiaphas was of his, who did not seem to me to have the faintest idea what I meant by the word "Religion." Thus, if you train a man to consider that forms are the essence of religious life, you cannot make him understand what you mean by "spirit" or "spiritual communion." The religious life of Unitarians, and what is properly called their faith, cannot, from the nature of the case, be defined in a creed. For a creed is limited and means to be limited, and the religious life and faith of Unitarians are unlimited and mean to be unlimited. Still, truth is truth; life is life. The divine

life, shown in human order, will show itself in ways resembling each other. And so it is that, even without a written creed and without any authoritative statement of form or dogma, the position of the Unitarian Church is probably more intelligible than that of any other communion in Christendom. True, in bringing together the writings of any religious communion, it would be found necessary to throw out on the right or on the left what the florists would call "sports," — the fanciful or exaggerated statements made by strongly marked individual men, fond of showing their independence and afraid to work in harness. The same liberty would be necessary in comparing Unitarian writers. But I believe that, with all our freedom, we should have fewer occasions to ask this indulgence — if it be one — than any other religious communion. And, as I have said, the religious system which has gained the name "Unitarian" seems more intelligible, because more harmonious within itself, than is any other religious system now known under a Christian name.

What is this religious system?

First and chiefly, the Unitarian Church regards man as the child of God. This is a fact, and not a metaphor. God is our Father in truth, and not as a matter of affectionate expression. We are his children in truth, and we are all his children. From this central truth all statements of total depravity or original sin fall away, as water drops from hot iron. We have no part nor lot with them. We take the new-born child as the child of God, train him as the child of God, treat him as a child of God, bid him pray to God as a child prays to a father, and trust him as a child trusts a father. He is never to be afraid of God: he is to consult God about everything, and work with him about everything. Man and

God are together, and nobody and nothing are to part them. Least of all shall any form of religion put them asunder.

It is the fashion to say, with a sneer, that the Unitarian system is a system of negations. But what can be more positive than this, its central statement, — that man is son of God, and God father of man? You must contradict lies. If the devil comes before you, you must rebuke him. And if ten or twelve dark centuries, which come to be known as the "dark ages," culminate in that awful negation that man is incapable of good, that he is unlike God, that he is lost and is exposed to damnation, then, if you know you are God's child, you must deny such a negation as that. And, as always, your two negatives become an affirmative. Your Church stands on the infinite affirmation of the "humanity of God and the divinity of man."[1]

2. This, as I have said, is the centre; and it is the most important statement of the Unitarian position. It is probably held in the private convictions of almost all Christians; but it is contradicted in words in all the written creeds, excepting those of the Liberal churches. It states the relations of man with God. This follows, of course, that man with man, each of us, must honor his fellow-man. He must bear his brother's burdens. Thus all men must be equal before the law. So far as the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights proclaimed this equality, they were Unitarian documents. So long as slavery was the law of the Southern States,

[1] I had occasion to use this happy expression some months since, and was sorry to find it cited in the papers as if the choice of the words were my own. The idea, of course, is perfectly simple, and as old, at least, as the New Testament. But I quoted this exact statement from a very instructive and suggestive essay by my friend Rev. Edwin C. L. Browne, of Charleston, S. C.

the Unitarian Church was virtually impossible in the Southern States. No religious system which divides priesthood from people, as the Roman Catholic Church seems to do, can fairly mount to the lofty height of this principle. The Unitarian Church of necessity recognizes the brotherhood of man.

3. It follows, almost of necessity, that it devotes itself to building up the kingdom of God in the world. For this, it certainly has good authority. It does not wince at any of the great texts which promise that we shall be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, which ask that God's kingdom may come on earth as in heaven, which say that Christ's disciples will do greater things than he does, which say that the King meant that all should come to his supper. It accepts them fully, without any attempt to tone them down. Really believing that God is at hand, the Unitarian Church really believes that God's kingdom is to come here, and says that its business is to make it come. If it had no such business, it would have no right to be.

4. From the belief that man is of the nature of God, it follows that man is immortal. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." To the Unitarian Church death is an accident, important, but not critical. Like the change when an infant's body becomes the body of a man, is the change when a man throws off the earthly house of this tabernacle and puts on the heavenly house. But the man remains, child of God and of his nature. His character or stamp remains: if improving, well; if failing, ill. But the man lives, of his Father's nature, in his Father's care, and under his Father's law.

5. Again, from the certainty that man is child of God and of the same nature, there follows a certain evident comparative indifference even to well-approved human methods of worship or of education. To the Unitarian

Church any form must be judged by its power to express the present truth: it must be tried by its fruits, and only so. Or, in other words, if we are all God's children, if we are "all kings and priests," we shall certainly come to God, each and all, with our own questions to receive from him his own answers. And it is certain that he wants us to. It is here that there comes in a certain eclecticism in the choice of worship, which may look like arrogance, and is sometimes so called. Thus, in the Unitarian Chapel at Cambridge, they venture to sing the Latin hymns of the Roman Church, which a High-Church Episcopal college hardly dares to sing, for fear the hymn should be misconstrued by somebody. And thus, on the other hand, it is very certain that the Unitarian Church accepts its preachers and other ministers only for the good they do, and cannot claim for them any functional merit or authority.

6. But instruction, help, progress, will come in from all history, precisely because the Church holds man to be God's child. Such help will come from the noble lessons God has taught to his noblest children in history. Nobody is to be set aside as "common or unclean." Something will be learned from every one who has really sought God; for to this Church it is certain that that man has really found him. What God has said to Wesley or Whitefield, to Fénelon or to Francis, to Bernard or to Ambrose or Augustine, thus becomes God's word, and not the mere fancy of a man. All history thus becomes sacred, and is studied with a tenderness and care with which no Pharisee can study Gentile history. Here is it that there comes in that respect with which the Unitarian Church regards men not Christians, such teachers of the world as Spinoza, as Philo and Plato, Buddha and Confucius, — a respect for which it is often calumniated. "Honor all men" is a direction which cuts low down. And the instruction

given to Peter on the house-top ranged much further than the mere etiquette of the intercourse between Jew and Roman. "Honor all men" makes it easier to-day for the Unitarian missionary to deal with a Ute Indian or with a Fiji Islander or with a Brahmin in Hindoostan. They meet, not as enemies on two sides of an intrenchment, but as the common children of one God.

It is thus that the Unitarian Church, naturally recognizing Jesus Christ as Leader and Lord of the whole Church, makes him the most Real Being in history, while the Church of the "dark ages" has succeeded in making him the most Unreal. As God visits every soul and gives help to every child, how certain is it that this Son of God, who receives the spirit of God without measure, who shows in his energy, his purity, his tenderness, and his unselfishness the fulness of every attribute of life, — how certain it is that he will be able to exhibit to us God's will and law completely! There is nothing unnatural in such an exhibition of perfect manhood. It is, on the other hand, perfectly natural. The world was not deceived in expecting it. It was precisely what the love of God would have intended. The world was not wrong in believing it had come. It was precisely what the world had a right to wait for. True, the world was wrong in worshipping him, who bade it worship his Father and his God. But it is easy to understand the origin of such homage. When the world sees its mistake, all the more it sees that the Son of God, who has stood nearest to God, who has understood him completely and relied upon him implicitly, is its sure guide in the interpretation of God's wishes and his kingdom. It is thus that, as it happens, the latitudinarians, the men who were not sectarians, have been in all ages those who have led back the Church to that tender allegiance to Jesus which the

pretences of Schoolmen had made well-nigh impossible. Such men as the Waldenses, in their mountain valleys, broke from the Roman Church because the Pope came between them and their Saviour. And you find, when you look up their confessions, that these men would not let their Saviour take the place of their God. So Thomas à Kempis, and the brethren of the life in common, were dreaded by their own time as heretics. It is doubted whether they are not outside the fold. All the same, it is Thomas à Kempis who shows every believer how he may commune with God as Jesus Christ did; and has done, who shall say how much, to help forward such communion. It is John Milton, who will hardly enter a house of worship, who can find no church broad enough for his heresies, who writes for you your "Hymn of the Nativity," and in "Paradise Regained" brings you face to face with your Saviour. And in these later days, in our own generation, all saturated with what you call the Unitarian Heresy, when you can hardly find a scholar who, in good faith, is willing to repeat the language of the Athanasian Creed as to Christ's person, you find such Christian realism as no age has known before. You find that the heretic of a century ago is he who is making your Saviour to be more near to you and more dear than he has been for ages.

7. From all these convictions, it follows as matter of necessity that the Unitarian Church demands purity of character from those who belong to it. Strictly speaking, this is all that it demands. It asks for other things; but character is essential. It is glad to have good sense in its members. It is glad to have intelligible theology. It is glad to have the results of the study of the past. But it must have purity of life. Idle to preach the possible perfection of mankind, if the man who preach or the

congregation who hear is satisfied with imperfection. Idle to bring to Jesus Christ the reverence due to the Leader of the world, if we do not follow in his footsteps. "Why do you say, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" In a Unitarian church there might be forty theories as to predestination, but there must be one determined resolve for purity of life.

I see that people are as eager as ever to condense the foundations of religious life in brief and hallowed sentences. Fortunately for us, the Unitarian Church has no reason to dread the severe simplicity of Scripture. The common phrase, "The Four Gospels are a good enough creed for me," has for us a substantial meaning and foundation. To those who ask a briefer statement, I am apt to say that those are convenient texts which Jesus taught at the well-side: —

"God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

"I must do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work."

"Lift up your eyes and look upon the fields: they are white already to harvest."

It would not be difficult thus to state all the special principles of the Unitarian Church in such expressions, at once venerable and familiar. That Church, in brief, exists —

"To do the will of God, our Father, who is in heaven;"

"To follow Jesus Christ, his well-beloved Son, who is the Saviour of the world."

It looks on all men as made of one blood in all nations of the world, and it teaches all men "to bear their brother's burdens." To those who try, it promises that the "spirit of God, the holy spirit, shall lead them into all truth."

It is, of course, at once the hardest religious system, and the easiest. It is hardest, because it offers no short cuts to favor, no leap into heaven, no sudden completion of all duty. Man's duty is as eternal as God's life: man must walk with God. But this is easiest, because it is the spirit of God which works in the life of man. Man's life is hid with Christ in God, when he loyally devotes himself to his Father's purpose. And from the Infinite Fountain man receives infinite supply.

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Size, 6 x 8 1-2; pages, 719; price, $1.00 *net;* postage, 23 cents.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 52]

THE LAYMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

FOR

THE CHURCH.

BY

HON. GEORGE D. ROBINSON.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

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THE LAYMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CHURCH.

ADDRESS AT THE ANNUAL MISSIONARY MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION, 1885.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: —

ONE might almost feel to-night that he could come here and drop off his official robe, and be a Unitarian with those that think as he does. You, perhaps, have heard Frederick Douglass tell the anecdote about himself, — that when he was about to speak in a certain place, a friend said to him, "Mr. Douglass, I suggest to you that when you go upon the platform you refrain from bringing your race so prominently before the audience." Said Mr. Douglass, "I cannot help that; for wherever I go I must take the colored man with me."

Now, as I come here to-night I claim the right to come as a man, as a citizen, greater and higher than any official, because citizenship creates official power. And in this blessed Commonwealth of ours we all accord full right and privilege to all men and women to think as they will, to worship as their conscience dictates, to act up to their highest ideals of right and duty.

It is a subject of congratulation, surely, that this Association meets to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary and the sixty years of work done by this organization. It comes here now to look back upon the accomplishment of the past, and forward into the demands of the future, and to give its pledge that in the time to come there shall be

greater success than in the past. The Association is this year marching up the hill to higher ground, to put its temple there, that it may overlook others and reach out into the broad area within its vision, and lead them to come up to the clear light, the conception and realization, that we in our hearts believe sincerely we possess.

Our interesting and eloquent friend from the West [Mr. Janson] has touched with great force upon the advancement we are making there. Our learned friend from Harvard has told us what is the demand upon the ministry, and given us the sure promise that that demand is to be met. Let me, in the few minutes allotted to me, enter my mild but firm protest in behalf of the pews. The ministers shall not have it all their own way. They are but the shepherds; we are the sheep. The flock is of more value than the pastor. The crop is richer and more precious and more profitable than the husbandman.

Let us take the Church, then, to ourselves, brethren of the laity. It is *our* church, not theirs. Let us claim it, hold it, work it, vitalize it, and energize it; and we shall thus have better ministers than the Harvard Divinity School has ever yet produced. Is it not time for us to put an absolute stop forever to this practice of calling a church "Rev. Dr. Smith's church," or "Rev. Mr. Jones's church"? Where are the people that go there? Have n't they any interest in that church? Is n't it theirs as much as his, if not more? Let us be a little jealous about that. What is a church for? For a minister to earn his salary —"dollars fifteen hundred"—in? [Referring to Mr. Janson's way of expressing himself.] Is that all you want of him, and what that great expenditure is made for? Well, then, let him go and earn his salary there on some week-day, when nobody is present. No, no! This Church of ours is an association of persons interested in following

the life and example of Christ; who believe in the essential worth and dignity of human life and character; who know that it is better for them as individuals, for them in little groups as families, and in the greater assemblages, as towns, cities, and States, that men and women shall be clean and honest and pure and Christian and uplifting. The Church stands for and works for that. The preacher, the pastor, is for the time the leader, it may be. But never should there be space between the leader and the follower. Close up the ranks! Purity of life and heart, love to God and man, — that we claim, that we ought to have. I know that it is commonly said that the pews lead the pulpit. It is not an infrequent remark that the congregation is far ahead of the minister. I sympathize with such a congregation. If they are such excellent leaders, why not take a hand at the business? Why stay away from church three quarters of the time, because the minister cannot keep up with you? That is the theory, that is the pretence. The pews lead the pulpit? Never, my friends, when they are *empty pews*. Never, if the word that is spoken from the desk Sunday after Sunday meets no obstruction in its course toward the pews by a human form. If the pews want better preaching than they have, let them demand it. Let them deserve it, and it will surely come, supplied by the unerring law that follows demand. In all candor and sincerity, I submit that if the church-believing people in Massachusetts, of this denomination and of all others, are thirsting for better preaching, they can have the best that human lips can utter if they will show themselves worthy and anxious for it. There is nothing that makes a preacher so eloquent as to have people to preach to. How any living man can preach to vacant seats Sunday after Sunday, and fire up his whole congregation, absent and present, is more than I can tell.

Let us look at this thing fairly. In the little observation I have had in the world as a church-going boy and man, and as one that likes the institutions that they serve, I am filled with admiration of the devotion and the ability manifested by the clergy. Look you down the length of your lives over the men you have known in that high calling, and answer this question, whether the service that has been proffered has not been of the highest nature, of the purest application, of the most sacred character. How near he has come to us all in times of the tenderest emotion, of the most touching bereavement, of the most delightful joys! And where is the home in civilized land that has not felt the benignance of the assistance that has come from these devoted men? They are not leaders, you say! Who led the sentiment for liberty in this country before the shots were fired at Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill? Who spoke, but the men from the pulpits? Who breathed again the tones of liberty and equality in the later day, but men who devoted their lives to the development of the highest in human character? Does any congregation in Massachusetts seek to lead a group toward temperance, and find the ministry pulling the other way? If so, where? Have we all, as members of church assemblies, been doing our utmost to uplift, elevate, and purify our fellow-men, and found the clergymen trying to degrade and destroy them?

Then again, let us bear in mind the change that has come over the relations between pastors and people within the memory of us all. Formerly, the minister was settled for life. Now his time is very short, and often numbered before he begins. You can tell a minister from his having his travelling-bag constantly in his hand. His wife often has the tacks up at the corners of the carpets all the time. Do we not know it? Is

there not too often a demand on the part of the congregation to have novelty presented; mere curiosity gratified, for the time being? And is there not too much of a claim that the preacher shall move on, when some new face has presented itself in exchange on some single Sunday, and somebody that has not been at church for six months declares that he is just the man they want?

What the preachers want, and what the Church demands, is the presence and active co-operation of the laity. In the consciousness that it is our church and not theirs, that we are to have the whole benefit of it, a duty belongs to us. Paying is not the whole, however liberal the contribution. We must have the dollars, but we want the persons; and we must have co-operation. There is many a minister that, with all his attempts at economy and all his striving to get along with what he has, would find himself endowed with greater strength and a keener enthusiasm if his whole people came Sunday after Sunday and met him, feeling that they were the church, and not he alone; that it stands for something more than a mere abstraction; that it is vitalized in human beings to whom he speaks and to whom he appeals in earnest enthusiasm.

One other point. What I am saying is not learned, I know; I need not have your assurance that you know it, too; but it is eminently practical, and, if followed, will prove to be an excellent remedy. Where we are failing again is in keeping the children away from our churches. No parent is doing his whole duty who allows the children, when they are able to go, to be absent from any of the church services; and the greatest debility is not found in those families who make a practice of going to church. You will not find always that those who are constant in their attendance at church are lean and haggard and consumptive. Children who can stand everything else from

Monday morning until Saturday night — including bicycles, tricycles, and skating-rinks — can endure the next day at church. Now, if *you* do not, if *we* do not, begin with the children and continue with the children, and get them and keep them in the right way, we shall find it very hard when they are grown up to begin to do this. You tell me that the Sunday-school is all-important. I join hands with you. I go to the Sunday-school, and always have; but I never got so tired in Sunday-school that I could not go through with the rest of the service. Let not the children be taught or allowed to believe that all they need to concern themselves about are the exercises of the Sunday-school. That is a mistake; yes, a serious mistake. You know from your own observation that children who have pursued that course come to a time when they find themselves too old to continue longer their connection with the school. Then the step over into the church is altogether too long for them to take. They step out, then, almost invariably. Show me a family that the clergyman or the people of the society can depend upon Sunday after Sunday to fill their places in the pew, and I will show you the family that began with the children just as soon as they were able to go to church and conduct themselves with propriety, and who kept them there with regularity. Make such practice universal, and we shall hear no more demands that the Sunday-school be abandoned, because it has encroached on the church. There is room enough for both. They are firmly knit together. There is no place of separation, and the interest of one is that of both.

If you and I wanted to say anything in the presence of all these ministers here to-night, to give them any hint of a change they should make, and if you will allow me to voice your expression, it would be something like this: fire a little lower! fire at the heart! Some of us do not

live all the time in our heads. Some have hearts. Some feel emotions. Some like to have their tender sensibilities aroused. Some love to have the warm and generous and throbbing side of them touched. They are a good deal more interested in that, more benefited by it, than they are by the everlasting statement of some metaphysical question. But in order to let the minister have that opportunity, we have got to carry our hearts to him. We must be there, and show him the humanity upon which he can play. The busy man, the thoughtful man, the overburdened man, that carries on intellectual exertion during the week, does not want, I submit, on Sunday to have his mental capacity taxed to the utmost to keep up with the reasoning in the pulpit. Play on the other strings, my friends; and the tune will be sweeter, and the harmony will be more lasting, and it will be more in accord with celestial strains.

Now, it is said that the old sharp lines of controversy are gone. There has been a Church Congress, and some of our friends are delighted that they have been treated respectably by other people who call themselves Christians. We ought to thank and congratulate ourselves that in this day and year of our Lord men and women who are trying to uplift humanity, who like pure things better than impure, who love righteousness and not sin, can come and sit together under the same roof and hear children's voices and shake each other's hands and give encouragement in all the work that they undertake. God bless them for what they have done this year! If it is a happy sign, let us welcome it; but it is very little in the way of coalition. Let us not as Unitarians trouble ourselves about what the other denominations think of us. Let us go to work by ourselves, within our own organizations, and demonstrate what we think about ourselves.

We have no apologies to make to anybody. We ask no one to offer any to us. If anybody else outside of us can make more of human life than we can, may they have the blessing of Divine Providence and the encouragement of our sincere sympathy. But the duty upon *us* is none the less real.

I plead then for the future of the Church. Let it be such that if the minister be gone away on a Sunday, we can run the institution ourselves.

IMMORTALITY, and Other Essays

By Charles Carroll Everett

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 280; price, $1.20 *net;* postage, 11 cents.

THE late Dean of the Harvard Divinity School has given us many scholarly essays on religious and philosophical subjects. Dr. Everett's penetrating and analytical mind, with his ideas expressed in clear and simple yet finished style, lends to all his writings an interest and charm not always associated with the topics discussed. The two previous volumes of his essays have omitted considerable excellent material worthy of a more permanent form of preservation than the periodicals in which it appeared, and it is from this source that the following essays have been chosen for the contents of the present volume: "Immortality," "The Known and the Unknowable in Religion," "Mysticism," "The Gain of History," "The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith," "Joseph Priestley," "The Philosophy of the Sublime," "Spencer's Reconciliation of Science and Religion."

SPARK IN THE CLOD, THE

A Study in Evolution. By J. T. Sunderland

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2 inches; pages, 230; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

IN this examination into evolutionary processes and the effect of our modern knowledge of them upon our intellectual, moral, and religious conceptions, the author takes us back to the earth's formation, where the order of creation, so far as it is of human concern, begins. Then, after the lapse of ages, man and his evolution become visible parts of this world-process, involving the problems of pain and evil, of God and the soul and immortality. Rational application of accepted facts of science is made to the world of religious ideas, and the necessary modification in the old conceptions of things is clearly pointed out. Finally, regarding human destiny and the hope of immortality, the author reasons from what man has been to what, in the rationality of nature, he must be; for "all evolution is at once a history and a prophecy."

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

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[No 53.]

CHURCH-GOING:

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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CHURCH-GOING: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled."

I LISTENED with interest to an able paper, read at a meeting of the Unitarian Club, on the question, "Why do not people go to church?" This has suggested to me my present subject, "Church-going, in the Past, the Present, and the Future."

Is it the fact that people do not go to church now as they formerly did? As regards certain places and certain churches, it is the fact; probably not so if we take the average church-going of the whole country and of all denominations. The church statistics of the last census are, unfortunately, not yet published. If we take those of the census of 1870, we shall find that in that year there were church-sittings provided in the United States for 21,600,000 persons out of a population of 39,000,000, and that the value of church property in 1870 was double that in 1860. It is not likely that these churches would be built and these accommodations provided for those who do not go to church. In some cases supply might go a little before demand, but not very much before. Where the churches are empty or half full, new ones are not likely to be built in large numbers. The exception to this rule is in a newly settled country, where the population is rapidly increasing. The new-comers to such places wish to have churches of their own denomination,

and so may build more edifices than are necessary to accommodate the existing population, expecting an increase with the increase of the place.

The figures of the census give no support to the opinion that church-going is dying out in the country as a whole. But no doubt in many places, and in certain denominations, the attendance on public worship in the last fifty years has notably diminished.

In my boyhood I lived much of the time in what is now called Newton Centre. It was then an agricultural town, the people being mostly farmers. Every one in the town went to church, attending two services, with an hour's intermission between. Church-going was regarded as a sacrament, essential to the safety of the soul. One man in the parish, and one only, never went to church, and he was looked upon with horror as an infidel and wicked person. I do not think the people paid any great attention to the sermon, nor did they regard that as of any consequence. They assisted at the service as the Roman Catholic assists at the Mass, — by their bodily presence; and that was held to be enough.

Meantime, in Boston, fifty years ago, the churches were equally well attended. Summer and winter they were always full. The members of the Liberal churches had mostly outgrown the sacramental notion; but they went to church, partly as a traditional duty, partly as a means of self-culture and personal improvement. Thus we may say, generally, that the two motives which took people to church fifty years ago, in this community, were the belief that it was an essential part of the religious life, and that it was an important means of moral and intellectual improvement. Both motives were personal. Churches were maintained by church-goers for their own benefit, not for that of others; with this exception, that it was regarded as important to society that church institutions

should be supported and an example set of church-going. Those who did not go to church for their own sake, went to set a good example. But little or no attempt was made to carry religious truth to outsiders; nor was it very necessary then, for there were no outsiders. Society was homogeneous; every one in country towns or in Boston knew every one else. All society was interwoven in one web of common habits, tastes, and mutual intercourse.

All this has changed. In cities and towns the population has become heterogeneous. The public opinion which once carried the community to church has ceased to act. We know so little of our next-door neighbor's life that the power of example has much diminished. Every one does as he likes, and no one thinks he has any right to interfere with the behavior of others.

The sacramental motive to attend church has nearly gone in our Protestant churches. We have been teaching for many years that religious forms, ceremonies, and usages are only means, not ends; and that Sabbath-keeping, church-going, and public worship are not essential to goodness, however valuable they may be as helps and aids. We have succeeded in convincing the people of this; and one result is that these religious acts are much less practised than before. When the church-goer finds, or thinks, that he derives no benefit from the service, he naturally asks why he ought to go. If it is a means to an end, and the end is not attained, then to continue to use the means would be illogical.

The motive of church-going derived from its being an aid to self-culture is also weakened in our time. Books and lectures, schools and societies for study, have been so much multiplied that one whose aim is self-culture can often get more help outside of the church than within. The time when the clergyman was the chief teacher of

the community has long passed by. Many look on the church itself as passed by. Instead of its being disreputable not to go to church, some take pride in it as a sign of superior culture. Simply by staying at home on Sunday, they consider themselves elevated to the rank of advanced thinkers. This is such an easy way of attaining an intellectual position that I do not wonder many practise it with some self-satisfaction. Others stay from church because, as they say, Sunday is the only time they have to be at home, or to read, or to rest, or to go into the country, or to see their friends.

The old motives for church-going being thus seriously damaged, the question comes, Can any new and better ones be supplied? I think there can.

I said that the two chief reasons for attending public worship in former times were personal, and had regard to one's self. Cannot motives of a larger and more generous kind take their place? Cannot we come together not only to get good, but to do good, and to get good in order to do good?

To those who stay at home because they prefer to do something else, or because they take no interest in religious services, we might indeed say: "What you have a right to do, and think it best to do, others have an equal right to do. Suppose, then, that all others should agree with your view, that it is best to stay at home on Sunday, what will be the result? The churches will be closed, the Sunday become a holiday, or a working day, like other days. This dyke thrown across the life of man, which once a week during twenty-four hours stops the rush and roar of business, and gives a space for rest of body and soul, will cease to operate. No more will the old and young, the rich and poor, go side by side to the one place where all feel themselves equal before God. No more will men's thoughts be lifted once in seven days from

earth to heaven, and reminded that they belong to two worlds. No more will men be taught from sacred books with a divine authority what they owe to each other and to themselves. They will listen no more to the Ten Commandments, to the Sermon on the Mount, the parable of the Prodigal Son, and the good Samaritan. The life and teaching of Jesus will be gradually forgotten, or remembered as we vaguely recall that of Confucius or of Socrates. No more will the waters of baptism touch the brow of the little child, and welcome him to his new life with a divine blessing. No more will the voice of prayer be heard by the side of the dying. The sinner will no longer be told of the pardoning love of God; the youth in the hour of temptation will remember no sacred text, teaching him to watch and pray against the coming evil. All churches are doubtless imperfect institutions, feebly realizing the great work which the world needs; but should we not be worse without them? If so, is it not a duty for all who care for the welfare of society to uphold them?"

So much we may say to those who think that the Church is no help to themselves. But we may say much more than this to each other. Our duty is to make the Church far more active, to change it from an ark of safety into an institution to convert the world to God. There are multitudes outside the churches who need the influence of Christian faith, and who are as ready to listen and believe as they were when the Saviour taught in the streets of Capernaum, or as when John Wesley preached, standing on a barrel in the streets of London. "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel [*or* constrain] them to come in, that my house may be filled."

Ah! we never know the value and the joy of our own faith till we teach it to others. For one, I should like to see all churches free churches. Is it not an anomaly that churches should be built for those who are already inter-

ested in Christianity, and who therefore need its teachings the least? But even where the seats are not free, those who occupy them might bring in their neighbors, and invite those who do not go to church to come in and sit with them. If we really felt that our church ought to be for the benefit of others as well as for ourselves, that it ought to act on those outside of Christian influence and away from Christian sympathy, would not our own interest be greatly intensified, and the whole spirit of the Church lifted to a higher level? The most powerful incentive to prayer is the need we feel of help that we may help others. The best education of soul and spirit is that which we obtain by going to seek and save those who are lost, — lost in this sense, I mean, that they have lost their way, lost their faith, lost their courage, lost their trust in God and their confidence in man. If you are ever able to help a single soul in this condition to a new vision of the Infinite tenderness, what a blessing comes back to yourself! Then you realize in the best sense the truth, "Give, and it shall be given you." Out of a poor and empty heart you try to give some loving and hopeful encouragement to another, and, lo! your own faith instantly becomes more strong; a new light comes into your own soul, and because you were not disobedient to the heavenly vision, you find the heavens open to yourself. When you help others, you are yourself helped.

It seems to most of us a difficult thing to speak to another about his soul. We have not been used to it, and it looks like interfering with what is no concern of ours. You will not, of course, suppose that I mean to recommend you to adopt the crude methods of the revivals, — to ask people "if they have found Jesus," or whether they have had a change of heart. There is a better way. It is to speak simply and naturally, when an occasion arises, of one's own needs, or faith, or doubt; of

one's own trials and helps, — not obtrusively, but when it is natural to do so. If we desire to use any occasion which comes, we shall often find the opportunity. We need not seek it, but only wait for it, and be prepared for it by asking God to give us the power of saying something, if only one little word, which may help some brother to bear his burden more easily.

All men need religion, no matter how little they may seem to care for it. Rough, hard men have a soft place in their hearts, if you can only reach it. Women of the world, who seem to live only for fashion, are really starving for some real life in the midst of their frivolous days. They know they are, but do not know how to say so. Those people who are believed to be infidels, and think themselves so, need God just as much as any others. Living only by intellectual formulas, fed only by negations, they are inwardly hungering and thirsting for some sight of spiritual realities. No one is contented while feeding on husks. Let us have faith, then, that in all men there is this latent need, this hidden want of the heart, this unsatisfied aspiration, this solemn whisper of conscience, never to be silenced, and we shall have courage to be missionaries of God to every one needing brotherly sympathy and help. We shall not trouble ourselves about what to say; "it will be given us in that hour what we ought to say and what we ought to speak." All the preparation necessary is to have in our hearts this prayer to God: "Dear Lord, if I meet to-day any of thy children who need thee, give me the right word to speak, and the right spirit in which to speak it." That prayer is short, but I think it will be enough.

Perhaps you may say that I have wandered far from my theme of church-going. But I believe not. Let a church have this missionary spirit during the week, and its members will be glad to go to church on Sunday to be

vitalized for their work. And the minister will also go to church full of desire to say something that will help to bring every child of God nearer to him. He will not preach about "Epicycles," or the "Moral Influence of the Transit of Venus," for he will need all his time and strength to say things which touch the deeper heart. What we all long to hear, what we all need to hear, is some testimony to spiritual realities. The most interesting thing any human being can say to another is to bear testimony out of a sincere heart to the presence of God with his children; to God's infinite, inexhaustible love; to the power which is in us all of being made better than we are, the capacity of coming at once into the relation of sons to God, brothers to mankind. That man, a child of time, weak, finite, imperfect, is yet the child of eternity, heir of the ages, and able to enter at once into communion with heaven, — this is the Gospel, the good news, which every human being needs to hear, is glad to hear, is made better by hearing.

"Freely ye have received, freely give." Let every church be a missionary church, seeking those in the highways of worldly life and in the obscure byways of poverty and suffering, and God's house will be filled. Let us remember that no one liveth to himself, and that no one dieth to himself. The church is not here for itself, but to help others to know God and Christ. We all ought to be missionaries. Each of us has a mission; and that is to use our talents, whatever they are, — our opportunities, whatever they may be, — to help those around us. Where there is a will, there will be found a way. Let this be our purpose and our daily prayer, and we shall find ourselves able to bring comfort and strength, peace and joy, to some child of God, who never knew till we showed him the truth that he is a child of God. Jesus says, "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you."

We are all apostles of Christ, as Peter, James, and John were apostles. We need not think of our own souls or of our own moral culture. While we are giving, if only a cup of cold water, to one of Christ's little ones, in his name, our own souls will be at the same time blessed and refreshed. Let us make our churches full of spiritual life; then those who have been outside of religious institutions will be drawn to them, not from a sense of duty, but as a comfort and a joy.

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WHAT IS LEFT

AFTER THE

QUESTIONINGS OF OUR TIME?

BY

REV. BROOKE HERFORD.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

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The Leadership of Jesus.
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The Progress of Mankind,
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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHAT IS LEFT AFTER THE QUESTIONINGS OF OUR TIME?

After the battle they call the roll. After the trials of hard times the merchant takes stock to see how he stands. It is well to do this sometimes in the higher realms of mind. I think that in the world of religious ideas and beliefs we have of late years had such a period of conflict and upheaval, and to some extent of misgivings and fears; and I believe a time has come when it is possible — and, if I read things rightly, very encouraging — to pause a moment and ask what is left us, and how we stand, in these greatest subjects of human thought.

I suppose that the present generation has witnessed such an overhauling and investigation of religious faith as the world never saw before. There have been other times of keen and wide-spread scepticism among certain classes of thinkers, but there never was a time when the questioning of Religion was at once so deep and searching, so general, and so entirely fearless and public. The questioning has been, on the whole, singularly earnest and fair, and generally even reverent. Of course, in any age there will be some mere scoffers and destroyers. But for the most part, alike in the direct questioning of religion, and along the parallel lines of science, there has been an honest endeavor to look at things truly, and to see what there really is in these great subjects.

For a generation this questioning process has been going on, and sometimes it has seemed doubtful whether, by the

time it was completed, there would be anything remaining. Now one point in the old beliefs of Christendom has been pronounced untenable, now another. One thing has been declared unscientific, and another unhistorical. First religion as it was systematized in the creeds, then religion as it appeared in the Bible, and at length religion altogether, was questioned, and by many given up. And even among those who still held to religion, and wanted to do, there has often been a doubt they hardly liked to own, whether it was not really being gradually undermined. All this has produced wide-spread anxiety and uncertainty. It has driven some into Catholicism, or into any other Church that seemed by its old consolidated authority to offer some firm standing-ground for the ancient pieties. And much more widely still, it has led to a slackening and hesitation in those pieties. People have doubted about supporting churches which might by-and-by be outgrown; they have become careless about prayers which it was doubtful if there was any Being to hear; they have hesitated to teach their children things which they might have to unlearn: and, altogether, it has sometimes seemed as if the drift of the real thought that dared face the light, was gradually pushing religion aside, either off into the cold altitudes of mere useless speculation, or back into the dens and caves of superstition.

Well, if I read the thought of the time at all rightly, there has come a distinct lull and pause in all this. Science, criticism, philosophical analysis, have had their freest and keenest way, and have come to something like a halt. I do not mean for a moment, either that their work is proving delusive, or that they have come to the end of it; but certainly there has come a halt in those inferences from their work which seemed to threaten religion. The fact is, it was always in the inferences (from Science, for instance,) rather than in any actual discoveries,

that the danger seemed to lie — and mostly in the inferences as expounded, not by the really greatest masters of thought, but by their mere camp-followers. But now, those inferences have been discounted. The uttermost they can lead to has been frankly faced, and it is coming to be seen that they leave the highest and deepest realities simply untouched. All the deep mysteries of being, which have through the long ages moved the heart of man to wonder, faith, and worship, are just where they were. If our modern Science can throw no new light upon them, at any rate it throws no new darkness; and it leaves us still with the old light, which has never failed or wavered, in the broad instinct and tendency of human growth, and in the clear, bright convictions of the wisest and holiest of our race.

So I have thought that it might be a help to us to consider, in something of closer detail, how all this is, — just how, here and there, at different prominent points of religious thought, the new researches and reasonings of our time have seemed as if they were threatening the old faiths, but, after all, do leave them, in all their deep essentials, where they were.

To begin with, perhaps the very first thing that has clearly emerged from the uncertainties of modern questioning, is — *Man* himself. It might seem a small consolation to those who felt as if all religion were slipping away from them, to be told that man remains. But it is not so trifling a remainder, after all. They tell of a poor Frenchman, who, when misfortune had apparently stripped him of everything, was asked: "My poor friend, what is there left to you?" "Myself," was the cheery answer. And, in reality, one's self, just this nature and life of ours, as we stand up amid the mystery of things, is quite as important a remainder for the reconstruction of faith as for the reconstruction of fortune.

You know it did not seem quite clear awhile ago that even man was going to remain. At least it was doubtful if anything was going to be left except various kinds of fibre and tissue. It was declared as in the line of science, and only a little ahead of actual proof, that man is derived directly from the brutes and ultimately from the primal fire-mists; and it was inferred that, from his fancied spiritual elevation, he had to be put back into the ranks as a mere being of earth like the rest, with no more real power over what he will do or be than a rose has of choosing whether it will be white or red. Now, I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that all this inference at least is now seen to be entirely baseless. The fact is, that all that Science or Philosophy may discover about man's origin does not affect the reality of what he is. The important thing is, not what humanity has grown from, but what it has grown into. Account for man how you will, you have to account for the whole of him, or at least have to take account of the whole of him. Even if man has to be reduced to the terms of matter, still the only effect is, that the definition of matter has to be spiritualized, so as to include all that, before, the world called heart and conscience and soul. For, the first life that you come across that has manifestly in it that quality which we call goodness — that is gentle and thoughtful and kind, that stands up against the wrong, and holds to the right even in the face of loss or pain, and that has a happy thankfulness and a patient trust, — why, such a life scatters all doubts about man's higher nature to the winds. The old theological ideas of man's higher nature may have to go; the idea of man's having been created all at once perfect, and having then by his first sin fallen into total depravity and hopeless ruin — that may have to go, I think is largely gone; but man, as he is, remains, with this mingled struggling nature, and among its factors those that we call

conscience and soul, and all the striving in which these subtler elements reach onwards. Man remains, — not only in these broad tendencies of the race, but in the highest life of the race; man, with his restless battling for the right; man, with his growing principles of kindness and beneficence; man, in his upward-reaching thoughts of trust and worship; man, in the hero, the sage, the saint, the Christ; man at his highest; — and he thus remains, not as an accident or an extreme, but as that to which the race is tending, which the very existence of the race means. And if, indeed, all this has come by slow, orderly development, through the moulding and pressure of the facts of the universe, — and therefore corresponding to the facts, — then all the more are these great lines of moral and spiritual movement unfailing indications, not only of what is in man, but of what is in the universe around him.

And so it is, that not only Man remains, but *God* remains. Many of the old ideas of God may have had to go, — I think they have, — but I do not hesitate to affirm that all that ever was essential and best in the thought of God stands on a firmer foundation to-day than ever before. It is curious to trace how this has come to be, for twenty-five years ago the common mind was possessed by a vague apprehension that the tendencies of scientific discovery were gradually leaving no place for Theism. Already Comte had said that "Science conducts God with honor to its frontiers, thanking Him for His provisional services;" and when Evolution came, multitudes jumped at once to the inference that, supposing it proved, it would supply "an explanation of the universe without God." But no one can look at the attitude of science to-day, or at the special position of the evolution theory, without seeing that all such inferences were wholly groundless. I speak

of this, not as for a moment pretending to criticise the reports of science, but simply noting what they are. And this is what I am struck with: that, however far in or however far back investigation may be pushed, it still leaves us as much as ever in the hold of that haunting mystery of how this marvellous universe has come to what it is, every atom and fibre of it throbbing with meaning and purpose. The solemn process of Creation just as surely obliges us to think of some mysterious Power within it, whether we think of it as concentrated in the mighty fiat of a brief six days, or watch it along the slow evolution of a million ages. Nay, the very terms by which scientific thinkers try to indicate that mysterious power without defining it, — such as Clifford's "mind-stuff," or Matthew Arnold's "stream of tendency," — all indicate, not merely a mystery, but a sense of its working in those very ways which have led mankind to call it by some name of Deity. I suppose that, of all living thinkers, Herbert Spencer has looked into this mystery with most freedom from any desire to explain it in any religious sense, and yet his latest word about it is, that we are ever "in the presence of an infinite and eternal Energy from which all things proceed." That is enough! Not all that religion needs, but all that we need for science to leave us, in order to justify religion. For with this one firm spot to start from, the mind is led inevitably onwards. Spencer himself began by simply calling it "the unknowable," but has now got as far as this "infinite and eternal Energy." Matthew Arnold goes further, and is sure that it is a power that "makes for righteousness." Others, while still unable to say "God," delight in extolling the glory and beneficence of "Nature." And I recently heard of one of the most noted and earnest agnostics of America, who said to a friend that really he believed he must take to using the word "God" again, in order to avoid the necessity for constant explanations

as to how much he believed about this unknown energy. And if it be so with those who try to look at the whole matter in the dry light of intellect, may we not feel that for the common heart of man the real thought of God does stand firmer to-day than ever before, — yes, firmer, because it has been questioned as never before, and still every line of questioning leads us back towards it, — towards the central, essential idea? The formal doctrines men have shaped out about God may have to go. The old doctrine of God as a Trinity is practically almost gone. All definitions of God constructed out of texts may go. But, when everything of that kind is cleared away, it still remains that the ultimate source and sustaining power of things is Infinite Energy, out of which we see ever proceeding, not only order and beauty, but life and thought and goodness. It is not any logical proof of God in that fulness of the thought to which the holiest souls have attained, but it is a strong assurance at the solid base of things that in "feeling after Him" along the old lines of religious thought, we are not stretching vain hands into infinite emptiness; that if we still only touch the hem of the Unsearchable, that Unsearchable is all that men have ever meant by God — and more.

Again, look at the great thought of *Immortality*. I suppose that there has been more doubt and questioning of Immortality in our time than ever in the world before. And yet may I not say that, to-day, Immortality stands firmer than ever? It stands firmer, because, while it was always affirmed by Religion, it was thought at the beginning of this period that Science showed almost insuperable difficulties in the way; but now the latest word of Science is that there is really no reason against it, and we are left with the full force of the vast testimonies from the religious side of man's nature. This suspensory verdict of Science

is the more significant because it was here especially that a distinctly negative verdict seemed possible. It was always admitted that no science of man's, reaching so little way into the mighty universe, could *prove* that there is no God. But it seemed as if, with this little frame of man to deal with, it might be possible to track life to its furthest recess, to make out what it is, and definitely ascertain whether it is anything that can survive the body. But what has been found is, that this wonderful thing "Life" is something of which in the last resort Science can simply tell us nothing. It certainly need not trouble us that Science cannot find out that life is to survive, because it is equally powerless to find out what life is, at all; and yet this is a reality, the very greatest reality in the whole make-up of us. Perhaps the most noteworthy recent word on the subject from the scientific side is that little work of Prof. John Fiske's on "The Destiny of Man," and he distinctly says, that the scientific evidence is even "against the materialist as far as it goes;" and he adds, that the assumption that the life of the soul ends with the life of the body "is perhaps the most colossal instance of baseless assumption that is known to the history of Philosophy." In the same way the difficulties which Evolution seemed at first to be raising against Immortality are disappearing on closer inspection. If man were really evolved from the brutes, it seemed an almost insuperable difficulty — how could the perishing brute-life develop at some point into life no longer perishable? But then this ceases to be any serious perplexity, as it is seen that, if Evolution be true, it must already, somewhere along its ascent from the primal fire-mists, have done a still more wonderful thing — in developing life at all. So that the supposed difficulties from the side of Science are clearing away, and we are left with the full force, not of mere religious *arguments*, but of those religious *tendencies* in our higher nature which have

ever caused the belief in Immortality. What a world of suggestion as to the force of those tendencies there is in that word of Dr. Martineau's: "Men do not believe in Immortality because it has ever been proved; but they are forever trying to prove it because they cannot help believing it"! There is the broad fact. This conviction of some life-to-come has grown up as a part of man's orderly development, has held its place even when distorted into forms of terror that men would have gladly disbelieved, has been inwoven with all man's loftiest aims and motives, and in the highest and holiest of our race has become a glad, triumphant certainty. Against this mighty world-growth what would weigh even the keenest perplexities of a generation? But even these very perplexities are found not to touch the innermost fact of life. And so the faith in Immortality remains. Many of the forms into which men have shaped their thoughts of it will have to pass away. Its lurid Hells, like its pearly gates and golden streets of Heaven, are seen to be but figures. The whole thought of the eternity of punishment is fast becoming incredible. But that this wonderful life which has somehow come to be in man does not perish with the body, is still to live on in that development which, even at its best, is here only begun, — that stands more secure in human faith than ever before.

And so it is with the Bible, and with that great Teacher in whom the light of the Bible culminates into the light of the world. *The Bible* remains, — and remains, if I read the signs of human thought aright, in an even nobler position of religious value and helpfulness than ever. Awhile ago it seemed doubtful if this would be so. Men had put the Bible on a false pedestal. They had set it up as an infallible oracle, — all alike inspired, all the very words of God, every sentence, on whatever subject, a little divine

proposition. And the pedestal was being pulled away. Science was disproving the Bible cosmogony; history was discrediting many of its narratives; criticism was showing that hardly a book in it is what used to be thought. So, altogether, it seemed as if it was about to be overthrown from any place of supreme reverence and helpfulness. And yet is it so to-day? I think the very opposite is the case. The vessel is found to be earthly and human, but it is not the less a heavenly treasure that is in it. Why, already, on this human side, is springing up a new study of the Bible, not less reverent and far more living. Even from those who used to be regarded as undermining it, come testimonies to the impossibility of doing without it. What a significant utterance is that of Professor Huxley, published awhile ago, but, as I happen to know, expressing exactly what he thinks to-day: —

"I have always been strongly in favor of secular education, in the sense of education without theology, but I must confess I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling which is the essential basis of conduct was to be kept up, in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters, without the use of the Bible. The Pagan moralists lack life and color, and even the noble stoic, Marcus Antoninus, is too high and refined for an ordinary child. Take the Bible as a whole; make the severest deductions which fair criticism can dictate for shortcomings and positive errors; eliminate, as a sensible teacher would do if left to himself, all that it is not desirable for children to occupy themselves with, and there still remains in this old literature a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur. And then consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history; that it has become the national epic of Britain, and is as familiar to noble and simple from John-o'-Groat's House to Land's End as Dante and Tasso once were to the Italians; that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite

beauties of mere literary form; and, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations, and of a great past stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest nations in the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities?" [1]

This, from one of the chief expounders of that Science which many have thought was to replace the Bible by the surer revelations of Nature! But the fact is — and it is a very important point, which I do not think has been sufficiently noticed — that the real effect of the scientific progress of our time has been to make, not *our* Bible only, but *all* the Scriptures of man's higher life, of more importance now than ever, not less. For, see! men thought that physical science was going to supply the exact truth on moral and religious things as on material things. But they find it cannot. It can tell them about substances and forces, though even before it has got half-way through these it is among realities which elude its grasp, and of which it can take cognizance only by faith. But when we go to it to ask about right, and kindness, and love, and reverence, it is absolutely powerless; it cannot deny that they are, but simply can tell us nothing about them. In the whole interpretation of the higher life, Science cannot help us, and admits that it cannot. And so we are thrown back with a new interest upon the developments of that higher life itself, upon the great faiths and lives which have been its outcome, and upon all the Scriptures in which it has spoken to the world. These old Bibles of many peoples constitute, all together, a manifold, irresistible evidence of the reality of Religion, the material of a Science as real, indeed, if not as capable of the same rigid

[1] Huxley's Critiques and Addresses, 1873, p. 51.

methods, as that of outward nature. But at the same time, while all these ancient Scriptures thus become more valuable than ever before, they show just as clearly the unapproachable greatness of the Bible. This also is the more striking because hardly looked for. A generation ago, Oriental scholars had held up so many pearls of beautiful religious thought which they had dug out of other Scriptures, that there was a growing tendency to believe that if those other Scriptures were equally accessible we should find them just as good as the Bible — perhaps, some of them, better. Well, we have them now. We have them in that grand series of translations of "The Sacred Books of the East." But the fact is, that nothing in our time has so placed the reverence for the Bible upon a rock as that great work. Because now we see that those gems of Oriental thought are really exceedingly rare, while the general character of the huge literatures in which they are embedded is dry, pedantic, and obscure beyond all telling. Clear above them all, clearer to-day than ever before, stands the old Book of Books, the Scriptures of the world's noblest line of religious life, voicing alike the spirit of man and the Spirit of God with an ever weightier certainty and clearness, and speaking to us in tones accentuated by the heart-beats of the world's best life, and with a solemn authoritativeness which we can never feel in any utterance of to-day. So the Bible stands firmer to-day than ever before. It stands firmer because this diviner element is cleared of much that, when claimed as equally divine, used to make the whole precarious or misleading. And there is still every divine element that ever there was. There is still every word that came out of the lofty Mount of Vision and the inspired communion of holy souls with God; there is still every one of the grand old words of praise, and righteousness, and strength, and resting in the Lord. Laws that have inwoven themselves with the moral

fibre of the world; Psalms that have echoed along the valleys and from the mountain heights of human experience; Prophecies that have thundered through struggling ages like the trumpet-tones of God; Gospels of faithful living and bright, glistening hope, that have made a whole new life for man, — all these remain; and as we learn to pass by their setting, often in the crude and obsolete ideas of the world's childhood, these diviner elements stand out clearer and stronger and more divine than ever.

And if it be so with the Bible as a whole, much more is it so with that *Christ* in whom the whole comes to its brightest point. That life of Christ has not been spared by the questioning and investigating passion of our time; and, moreover, apart from any question of the pre-eminence of his life, the whole position of special reverence and discipleship to him, the whole idea of living out our religious life *hold of his hand* as it were, has been assailed as false to the spirit of progress and the true individualism of religious thought. And yet I believe that in both respects the old Christian discipleship remains, justified, and is going to remain.

Look at the image of Christ as it is reappearing to-day out of the dust of critical controversy. Every detail of that image has been challenged by the most searching criticism. But what has it taken away? I think it has cut away the ground from the idea that he was God. It has shown plainly how that idea grew up in subsequent ages, as Christianity passed out among the heathenisms to which it was natural and common to think of any pre-eminent man as really a God come down from heaven. But what else has criticism done? Has it really affected that unique image which lives forever in the Gospels, except to bring it out more plainly? Some think, indeed, that it has shown these Gospels, too, to be no longer so

reliable as used to be supposed, but of quite later date; that they are not records of companions and eye-witnesses, but only collections of traditions perhaps not completed till the second century. I do not think this is at all proved; but even if it be so, does it affect the historic reality of that great Figure which left such a marvellous impress on those around, that even so long it kept its clear place in men's hearts? Fortunately we know exactly in what direction to allow for the influence of tradition. It was busy overlaying the simple human personality with an artificial glory of Deification. But all this, like the rubbish that buried Pompeii, in burying Christ's humanity, really preserved it. Just because tradition was so busy evolving the thought of his Deity, it left the simple memories of his actual life on earth curiously untouched. That simple life, as it stands in the Gospels, we may take. Occasionally his words may have been dislocated; about some of the deeds we may feel doubtful. But the main lineaments of that great life, and its deep character and spirit, remain, really all the surer for the criticism. The qualities which have taken hold of the heart of the world, — the love which rebukes our selfishness, the purity which shames our sins, the strong words of righteousness which cut through casuistry like a sword, the perfect peace which stays our hearts in sorrow and unrest, the almost awful holiness which not so much believed in eternity and God, as saw and knew them, and makes us certain of them too, — all this remains, and it is true, indeed, that, whatever has been rendered uncertain, "much more that which remaineth is glorious."

And still there is one final question about this: not so much whether Christ remains, as whether *Discipleship* remains. Granted that holy and wonderful life, is it simply left to us as one of the incidents of history, one of the

many factors out of which we still have to work out, each for ourselves, our faith and our life? Or is Christ still left to us in that great permanent relation of the mastership of thought and leadership of life, in which the heart of the Christian ages has looked to him, in which men have loved to sit at his feet, to rest in his revealing certainty of divine things, and to work and pray in his dear name? This is the last question I shall consider, and for the living helpfulness of religion perhaps the nearest and most momentous to us, and I am convinced that the answer is in no real doubt. Still, I cannot speak of it as something simply to be noted as settled; for there are many who uphold religion who disclaim any such attitude of special Christian discipleship: some who feel all the holy beauty of Christ's life and word who yet earnestly protest against any such constant reference to him. They think it a mere piece of sentiment, if not a mere piece of superstition. Whatever you find of Truth in him, by all means take it, they say, but take it as what you have thought, not resting in any authority of his. I know this seems the natural tone of mental freedom, and it claims to be the scientific method. And yet, even in Science itself, we do really keep to no such rigid individualism, and in the higher realms of human faculty we do not even attempt it. Even in Science we do not attempt to work out everything for ourselves. A few great teachers are recognized as authorities even by those who most earnestly protest against our speaking of the authority of Christ. True, it is not an absolute authority we ascribe to them, but it is a very real authority. Still more so is it in those finer, subtler realms of human faculty in which absolute verification is impossible, such as art, poetry, music. Let these have come by evolution, if you will; but when the finer developments have come, they sway the world and hold mankind to their higher mark. So there come along a Shakespeare, a Mendelssohn,

and we sit at their feet and own them as our masters. We do not choose them, but they choose us; they lay upon us a constraining touch of power, and compel us to follow them. They are revealers to us, revealers each in the realm in which they are so great, and not the less revealers that it is to our own perceptions — kindred to their own — that they appeal. Well, how should it be otherwise in man's religious life? Must it not be that in this highest, subtlest realm of all, while all shall have some perceptions that way, a few loftiest souls along the ages shall be the teachers, revealers, masters, to the rest? Why, so universal is this necessity of life to group around great personal centres, that those who repudiate the idea of sitting at Christ's feet cannot get away from the tendency to sit at some one's feet. Only, the great, true Christ put aside, men are at the mercy of a hundred lesser personalities. I have been especially struck with this in America, where, if anywhere in the world, all self-reliant individualism is at its height. Men may fly off from the old Christ-centre, but it is simply to be drawn into new groupings of essentially the same kind of discipleship, — sometimes to men of noble thought and real originality, but oftener to the mere strong assailants of the old, and the leaders of a score of petty "isms." These may all preach the strongest individualism, but their work is really done by insensibly taking that very place of mastership which to the greatest of all we are bidden to refuse. And so this clinging of our religious life to Christ, this loving to hold up his words before us, this sense of an authoritativeness and revelation in his thought when we can clearly see it, this feeling of its being good to weave in the symbols of his name and work and suffering into our religious life, — all this is not an exception. It is not the refuge of religious weakness; it is God's provision to help us to religious strength. There is profound truth in that parable of the vine and its

branches. We have got to abide in him, or we shall never bear much fruit. What has come of these movements that our generation has seen for building up what some thought would be more advanced kinds of religious life, dissociated from the old discipleship, and from the names and words and usages which keep that discipleship in mind? For the most part, a fastidious and isolating scepticism, which grows into a habit, until nothing seems certain, nothing strong, nothing very much worth striving for or working for. There are noble individual exceptions, I know, — branches that have cut themselves off from the old vine, and yet seem very living, — but it is the old sap that is in them! That keeps them going for awhile. I have watched these movements in our Liberal Churches — watched them for five-and-thirty years now. I have never been afraid of them. I know they have been one inevitable outgrowth of that free thought and honest speech which our fathers laid upon us as their most sacred charge. I have fought all through my ministry against every tendency to give such movements the cold shoulder or to freeze them out of our fellowship. But, all the same, I am ever more and more convinced that there is no permanent life and help in them. At their best, they are brilliant episodes leading to nothing. They nourish a faith to which the great realities of God are at times so clear that it spurns the idea of any revelation being needed, but to which in other moods they are all clouded and uncertain. And they are *not* uncertain. This age, with its investigating passion, has probed to the very depths of being and found their roots still there. Are we to be constantly re-opening every question, and arguing everything over again from the beginning? That is good for a philosophical investigation, but for the use and power of daily living we want something to rest in nearer, more concrete, — not something we shall have to seek, but something to seek us and hold us.

It is here for us, in Christ! It is here in these words of power which come sounding through the centuries with a weight of authoritativeness greater than any can explain. It is here in this wonderful life, which, passed into the eternal world, has made that world nearer to man than ever before, and living there forever has become a gracious presence to the loving heart of faith. Yes; this also remains. Not only the deep, eternal verities of Soul, and God, and Immortality, but this Bible in which they grew into the world's noblest book, and this Christ in whom they were "made flesh," translated into earth's one perfect Life.

And now, what does all this mean in practical life? It means this: that all these misgivings people have been having of late years as to what was going to become of Christianity, all the doubts as to whether this whole religious side of life was not being analyzed out of existence, are utterly and entirely groundless

It means that we may take our part in this religious side of life, and join in with the great Christ-ward, God-ward, Heaven-ward striving of humanity, with a new confidence that in so doing we are not building on mental quicksands, or laboring for dreams and visions, but building on the rock, and working out the noblest realities of being.

It means that the old institutions of religious teaching and worshipping are going to stand, and that we may take up their word, their song, their prayer, with no more of that doubt and hesitation which for a generation past has so often enfeebled them.

For the ministration of Religion, it is almost like a new dispensation. I dare say some of you who read this have been among those who have complained of the preaching of late years as uncertain and straggling, forever talking about "Science" and "Evolution," and groping about

among the foundations; and you have longed for a little of the old Gospel for a change. Yes; and yet how could it help being so? I tell you it has been a pretty serious thing to try to be a minister in this past quarter of a century! With every question reopened all about us; with the very foundations of Religion threatened; with Science inviting men into its brilliant paths as the only way to any certain truth; hardly able to say a prayer without some one challenging it as an obsolete formality, — do you wonder if we have often been straggling in our choice of subjects, uncertain and defensive in our tone, and sometimes voicing more of doubt than faith? But if what I have said be true, — and it is true, — those days are passing. The foundations have been looked to, and they remain. Much dead wood has been cut away; but out of the storm and the testing stands out in stronger reality than ever the grand realities of Religion, with the Gospel of Christ's Life and Word as their divinest expression, the one sure, unchanging rest for the world's weary and unstable life.

And as with the minister's part in this, so with that of the people! It means that you may go to worship and join in all its varied service; and that you may teach your children to pray, and tell them the story of Christ, and bring them up to read the grand old Bible words, with a new certainty that you are not propping up a perishing form, or teaching what will have to be unlearned, but only keeping in the fellowship of the world's best life and of the things that remain forever.

To us Unitarians, all this should come with a peculiar encouragement. Because these things which thus remain are the very thoughts and truths for which our fathers originally went apart, and for which we have constantly pleaded as the simple essentials of Christianity. The One, Infinite Father-life, without any confusing subtleties about the inner relations of His being; the dignity of Human

Nature, as something not hopelessly lost and ruined, but ever advancing as the ages pass; the solemn unfolding of the Life to Come, as gracious with some hope for all; and Christ, not as a God to be worshipped, but as a great, holy Teacher to be loved and followed, — these are the very things for which we have stood, and these are the very things that have survived the grinding of logic, and the questioning of science, and the paring down of criticism, and are coming out to-day with a new clearness as the pure essence of Religion, and the truth that will stand forever.

So we may go forward in working for them, and spreading them, and building them up in every way we can. We may not see them perfectly — who can? We are but seekers still. But at least we have got clear from the obscuring dogmas which have so long shut out the brightest light of God. We look toward God, toward Christ, and toward the solemn life to come, not setting up any small conditions of what men must believe about them, but simply sure that *there* is light, and that to the pure in heart and those who keep their faces towards it, the light shall grow more and more. They are —

> "Great truths that pitch their shining tents
> Outside our walls; and though but dimly seen
> In the gray dawn, they will be manifest
> When the light widens to the perfect day!"

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

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[No. 55.]

CHRISTIANITY PERMANENT.

BY

REV. FRANCIS B. HORNBROOKE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

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CHRISTIANITY PERMANENT.

To the student of Christian history, who carefully follows the movement of Christianity, and who sees the many forms it has assumed, it is hard to understand how it can be what its disciples claim, one and the same in all places and times. The Roman Catholic solves the difficulty by entirely ignoring or denying the Christian value of all that is not sanctioned by the church. To him difference is heresy and has no part in the movement of Christian thought. Still, even he is compelled to admit that there have been changes at the least in the forms of doctrinal statement, and that much not explicitly taught in the beginning is now a necessary portion of the faith. The dogmatic Protestant assumes that there is one unchanging faith which has been maintained by all faithful souls through the ages. But the more closely this assumption is examined the more untenable will it appear. The earliest writings of Christian fathers fail to state very much that is deemed essential in the theological systems of modern times. And in the history of opinions for over a thousand years we can find no trace of many doctrines which are often deemed essential, and sometimes necessary to salvation. Then there are those who, when they perceive all these changes, modifications, and differences in Christianity, regard them as sure evidence, either that there is no substantial truth in it, or that the Christianity of to-day has little or nothing in common with the Christianity of the apostles and fathers. Now the Liberal Christian does not see reason for the adoption of such a

view any more than that of the Roman Catholic or the dogmatic Protestant. He regards Christianity as the result of the manifestation of a life, in which the Christian consciousness in every age has found the same power for deliverance, the same revelation of the divine in the human, the same reason for the claim of authority. I need not say that that life is the life of Jesus. The Liberal Christian is ready to allow all the varied forms which Christianity has borne. At the same time, with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he would declare "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." It is undoubtedly true that many different and opposing theories have risen and disappeared; nevertheless, to him the essential significance of the Christ life has not altered with these, any more than the sunlight changes its nature with the varying media through which it passes. As the color of the clouds does not affect the nature of light, so to him, what is most real in the nature and influence of Jesus is unaltered by the modes of human thought. In the light of history, in the face of critical knowledge, the Liberal Christian sees no reason why he should not boldly and honestly affirm the unalterable influence and permanence of the life of Jesus Christ. Is there good reason for that belief? That there is, I think we shall find when we notice some of the features in the life of Jesus which the Christian consciousness of every age has made most prominent and deemed most important.

1. Nothing in the Gospels, in the Epistles, or in the history of the church, stands out more clearly than the fact that the mission of Jesus was to save men from their sins. That was the burden of the angelic announcement, and of the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost; and later still of the teaching of Paul. That has always been the most attractive element in the manifestation of Jesus. It is that which has drawn all men unto

him. It matters not how you explain sin, still there is something in his nature and experience which has the power of deliverance from its bondage. In the earliest ages of Christianity many thought of sin as a slavery to the evil one. Somehow they and all men had come under the yoke of Satan. Jesus was the one who freed them from it. Later on it was maintained that man owed a debt to God, too great for him to pay, but which Jesus as the God-man could pay by the sacrifice of his life. When men began to realize how inadequate and hard a conception like this was, they began to see in Jesus the one who gave them the assurance, as no other had or could, that their God and his God was willing to let his sunlight visit their hopeless hearts, and by the sunshine of his presence to quicken in their natures all that was good, to wither all that was evil. Manifold are the ways in which Christians have imagined deliverance from sin was to be found; but Jesus has always been regarded as the redeeming and delivering power. And it is significant that whatever theory of sin may be adopted there is something in the life of Jesus which helps towards escape from it. Is sin the necessary result of man's imperfect development? then the fact that here is one who has risen so far above his fettering conditions gives hope that at last man may rise from what he is to what he ought to be, and that as he has borne the image of the earthy, he may at last bear the image of the heavenly. Granted, that such a manifestation of highest excellence furnishes him only with a hope; still hope has in it an uplifting and purifying power. The presence of the highest form of spiritual life in one is an implicit prophecy of its ultimate attainment by all. For the lower can find its explanation and its promise only in the higher. "We know not what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." No wonder

the apostle adds, "Every man who hath this hope purifieth himself even as he is pure." Or again, if sin is defined as weakness, what strength we find in contact with a life that has such might of inspiration in it as we find in that of Jesus! Inherent weakness by companionship with a powerful nature receives strength. The leader who has never flinched on the battle-field imparts something of his invincible courage to the weakest heart. The man who has been true to his ideal when adherence to the heavenly vision meant the loss of his dearest hopes, aids others in striving to be true. Every strong soul has in itself power to strengthen. And if history tells us of no other life stronger than that of Jesus, to whom shall we when conscious of weakness cling as to him? We may define sin as selfishness, — the endeavor of man to live mindful only of his own interests, regardless of those of others; and then what can deliver him from that like that unselfish one who could save others, but not himself, who in the agony of the cross considered the sorrow of his mother, and ministered to the need of a thief? Who can deliver us from our self-centred desires like him who cries, "Not my will, but thine be done." When Saint Paul contemplated all this he was so absorbed by the self-sacrifice of the cross, and his love for the suffering one grew so strong, that when he found himself freed from his little thoughts about self, and living a life from which selfish desire had passed away, he could not think of this new life as his, and saw in it only the incorporation of the life of Christ. "Now I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me." What the great apostle experienced in his life has been experienced in the lives of thousands in every generation. Self has been destroyed by the attractive power of a self-devoted nature. Think what we will of sin, in that life of Jesus we may find deliverance. In every form in which it has revealed itself

in man's experience it has been met and conquered in that. No man, however he may have become conscious of his infirmity, his defect, or his selfishness, no man who has sought in downright earnest to master his infirmities, his defects, his selfish yearnings, but has found in Jesus, somehow, the power that made him free. To one it has given hope, to another strength, to another an unselfish spirit, but to all alike it has given the sense of triumph over the lower nature. And so long as human nature remains what it is, so long as it is conscious of a desire for something nobler than its present condition, so long as man longs for greater strength to fulfil his highest purpose, and to rise above the dominion of transitory desires, so long will Jesus be to man what he has ever been, — the same source of hope, of inspiration, and of spiritual power.

2. And Jesus is the same to every age, in that every age finds in him a revelation of God. When he was asked to show the Father, his reply was, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Paul speaks of "the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ." That in Jesus men might find a clearer and fuller manifestation of God was the simple and undoubting faith of the first and earliest believers. And succeeding ages only repeat that faith, though the efforts of speculative thought to explain it only too often obscure its real importance. The contest of the fourth century about the nature of Jesus may seem to us a mere word-battle. And so in many of its forms, and to many of the contestants it really was; but to those who look more deeply it was something vital. It was an effort to decide whether, indeed, God could really be known. If Jesus were only the highest angel in human form, or the highest existing being, and yet in his inmost being was sundered from the nature of Deity, how was it possible for him to bring

God near to man? The decision of the council of Nicea that Jesus was of the same nature as God, whatever we may think of its dogmatism, and however unsatisfactory we may regard the attempt to mechanically unite two terms, human and divine, which to the philosophy of that time were separated from one another by an infinite distance, was after all the one which best satisfies the Christian consciousness of the earlier centuries, that in the person of Jesus there was a revelation of God. And it is a striking testimony to the unyielding grasp which the heart of Christendom had upon that great conception, that in spite of all the difficulties in which its imperfect philosophy was involved, and in spite of all the objections which clear-eyed common sense might urge against its formal statements, it resolutely maintained that position. The Christian church would not allow that the human was assumed *after* the birth of Jesus, or that it was merely adopted. To all the ages Jesus was what he was to the first, — the manifestation in the human of the divine, in man of God. When Western Christendom was divided in the sixteenth century, it was Luther who declared that in the interest of the Christian consciousness the human and divine must be fused into one. But is it the same to-day? If we mean by that question, whether that belief is expressed in the same forms of thought, it is certainly not the same. But if we mean, whether the central conception is still the same, it just as certainly is. We may have outgrown that philosophy which regarded the human and the divine as exclusive of one another, as having nothing in common, and as separated from one another by an infinite distance. We have learned and are still learning that there is no way in which we can come to the knowledge of God, save through our knowledge of man. Every term we use to express the nature of Deity is derived from what we know

of humanity. We cannot tell where the divine ends and the human begins. We can only know that the highest form of the human is the nearest approach to the divine. And because we know no higher form of humanity than that which appeared in Jesus, we find in him to-day what other Christians found in him yesterday, — the revealer of God. The faith of the present time finds its best statement, not so much in the decrees of councils as in the words of the poet,

> "Thou seemest human and divine,
> The highest, holiest manhood, thou."

In the Quaker poet is summed up the unvarying consciousness of all ages of Christianity.

> "We know in thee the fatherhood and heart of God revealed."

Nor can this verdict be changed in some distant future. All revelations of God must come through man. Nature never has supplied, and never can supply such a revelation. Nature religions have never had a moral character. The religions that have given moral impulse to man have not proceeded from the contemplation of Nature, but from those who have found written on their hearts the commandments of God. If, at times, Nature has seemed to speak some word of God, it will be found to be but the echo of the word within. Man may and does find suggestions and lessons in the outward world, but only as illustrations of the thought of his soul. But for the interpretation which man puts upon it, Nature would have no language nor speech. It is the pure in heart who see God. It is the light of God in his nature throwing its rays over all things that causes Jesus to see in visible forms the revelations of God. Without that inner light Nature could not have spoken such good tidings of God. It is the life of Jesus which interprets Nature. Nature cannot interpret him. What he was yesterday, he is

to-day, and will be forever, since in and through him the ages see the highest revelation of the divine, because they see in him the highest form of the human.

3. And Jesus is always the same, in that his authority always rests upon the same foundation. Different reasons may have been given, but in the last analysis that authority ever has the same basis. When the people heard him they said he spoke with authority; but by what did they consider that authority was supported? Not by his miracles, for at that time he is not reported to have performed any. Not by his Messianic dignity, for he had not proclaimed it. Not by his supernatural origin, for there is no reason for believing that any of his hearers had ever heard of it. Not by the authority of any church, for that depended upon him, not he upon it. Judaism disowned him. His authority for them consisted in the fact that what he was and what he said were seen to be realities. They met the moral and spiritual demands of his hearers, who saw in them certitudes of the spirit. They saw that what he proclaimed had a right to their belief and to their obedience. That was the real basis of his authority then. It is no more and no less now. What it was and is, it always must be. Because men saw in his teaching something more in accord with the needs of their spirits, they left the heathen temples and the schools of philosophy to follow him. It was no theory of the Logos that led a man like Justin Martyr to find in Jesus a solution of his doubts and questionings. It was because he had found a satisfactory answer there that he devised his theory to explain him. The barbarian hosts did not yield to the assumptions of ecclesiastical authority, but to the authority upon which that was founded. The creeds that have dominated men's minds and hearts have done so because they expressed or seemed to express those teachings which

reflected the highest moments of the human soul. Dogmas, theological systems, ecclesiastical organizations, have never constituted, they have only more or less imperfectly represented that sovereign authority with which Jesus appeals to the moral and spiritual perception. That authority rests upon the same basis that it always did. Essentially it has neither increased nor diminished. If one cannot recognize its value and its right to command, no church and no creed can make him more certain of his duty. It is sometimes said that the teaching of Jesus is not now obeyed as in former times, and that therefore it cannot be said to have the same authority. But the fact is it never has been obeyed by the majority. It never, even in what we in our ignorance call the ages of faith, was the actual guide of men. It never wholly controlled the court and the market-place; but it has always commanded, in the past and in the present, the recognition of the most earnest, the most high-minded and deep-souled men and women. Now as ever, like the voice of conscience, its right is recognized even when its dictates are not obeyed. Now as ever it is the voice of man's best moments; now as ever it is the guiding light of all "who would live in the spirit." Indeed it may be said that it is only to these in any time that the authority of the teaching of Jesus has been self-evident. What has been true, is now true, that in spite of all opposing appearances that authority has never been felt by the men whose interests are concentrated upon self, by the women whose supreme motive is display, or by the careless, indifferent spirits who care nothing for the struggles and sorrows of their fellow-creatures. The right of Jesus to speak with authority is felt, now as always, by the self-devoted, the earnest, and the compassionate. It is when we ourselves become conscious of the larger aim and the more generous purpose, when we glow with the inspiration

of the loftiest motives, and when every fibre of our souls is stirred to loving thought and helpful deed, that we learn that what once seemed commands have become the clearer expressions of what we have often felt, but could not fashion into speech. Authority like that Jesus had when he preached the sermon on the Mount, and that authority he has now. It is sometimes urged that some of the teachings of Jesus have been outgrown, and that others, if carried into practice, would endanger our civilization. No doubt it has always seemed so; no doubt in every age men have imagined themselves to have grown out of truths when they have not grown up to them. Truths have often been abandoned as worthless, not because they had no value, but because men could not perceive their value. What have seemed outside the real life and thought of man to-day are the only things that can satisfy them on the morrow. One age emphasizes one truth to the exclusion of another, and the excluded truth becomes the guiding light of a later time. That some part of the teaching of Jesus is ignored in any age is no reason for asserting that it never has, or never will have any value. Then it is said that if certain teachings were carried out they would tend to overthrow our civilization. But it may be necessary to decide, if this be true, which we can best afford to lose. No doubt, Christianity in some ways hastened the fall of the Roman empire; but we can see that the Roman empire was needed much less than it was. And it may well be doubted whether our civilization is so perfect that it is necessary to lay aside the real meaning of even the hardest precept of Jesus to save it from destruction. It has been and is now sometimes urged as an objection to the teachings of Jesus that they lay too much stress upon the passive virtues. But when one of the ablest of our American scholars and thinkers declares in a recent book that the qualities that help man to suc-

ceed are developed out of all proportion to those qualities which tend to make men considerate of the rights and the needs of others, there seems to be the same need for placing emphasis upon the culture of the affections. Eighteen hundred years of Christian teaching has not produced any one-sided development in that direction. We are yet, as a rule, less deficient in knowledge and power than we are in kindly impulse. In spite of change and advancing knowledge the authority of Jesus remains unchanged. The modes in which it has been apprehended, or in which it has been supported, have varied with the points of view which from time to time Christianity has occupied, but the basis of his authority is none other to-day than it was when he first opened his mouth and taught.

What thought can bring more gladness to our hearts than this of the unvarying significance of the life of Jesus Christ to every age? It brings us into communion with the heart of Christendom. It enables us to rejoice in the fact that while we may open our minds to all the light of the present, we need not close our hearts to the influence of him who is the light of the ages. It reveals to us how, in spite of all our advances and all our changes, we have not moved beyond our confidence in that which has always been the joy of the Christian consciousness, and that we can still find in it, as our fathers did, helpfulness, light, and guidance; that still we may join the ages past, and with them repeat the apostle's words, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

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By James Martineau.

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 449; price, 75 cents *net;* postage, 11 cents.

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By James Martineau

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IT is indeed what its sub-title indicates, a volume of "Timely Thoughts for Religious Thinkers." Edited by William R. Alger. "Take this volume for all in all, it is the product of a bold, independent, and original mind; from the beginning to the end it throbs with life, is suggestive in almost every sentence; opens wide visions of thought on questions that concern the sublimest interests of the soul, and deals with them in a manner worthy of their sublimity; breathes everywhere the humanity of a strong yet gentle nature; arouses the heart to the brave, the generous, the honorable, the heroic; repels with righteous scorn the mean, the maudlin, the effeminate, everything in idea or conduct that is spurious or unmanly; is written in a style of musical variety, as well as soaring and expansive grandeur, and which only errs, when it does err, in an excess of beauty; contains more passages of striking, profound, and inspiring eloquence than we have ever before met with in the same number of pages."

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TRUE AND FALSE LIBERALISM.

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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TRUE AND FALSE LIBERALISM.

"The perfect law of liberty." — *St. James.*

"Free, yet not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." — *St. Paul.*

"Be as free, be as liberal, be as courageous as you will; but be religious because you are liberal; be devout because you are free; be pure because you are bold; cast away the works of darkness because you are children of the light." — *Dean Stanley* (to the young men of Oxford).

THE words "liberal," "liberality," and "liberalism" are among the largest, best, and noblest words we have in our language; but they are also among the most abused.

Particularly are they misapplied, misappropriated, and abused strangely in connection with religion.

Make inquiry through the land for religious liberals, I mean for persons *called* or *claiming to be* religious liberals, and whom will you find? You will find about the most motley collection of people that you can imagine. The kinds of religion they believe in will range all the way from orthodoxy of a rather diluted type, to pure theism, and from that again off to a thousand eccentricities of radicalism and individualism. Nevertheless they all call themselves liberals, because they have departed more or less widely from the theological teachings of the dominant churches. Indeed, you will find rising up in response to your call for religious liberals many who do not believe in *religion* at all, — as they will not be slow to tell you; many who declare that religion is merely superstition, or priestcraft, which enlightened people (like themselves) have got

beyond. What the world wants now, to bring the golden age, is to have religion replaced by science, and churches by theatres and lyceums. Thus your collection of religious liberals you will find to contain the most incongruous elements, and extremes the most diverse. Many of the best people of all our communities will be in it; so will some of the worst. Men and women of highest intelligence will be in it; so will men and women of the densest ignorance. Men and women of broad views, large sympathies, nobly progressive ideas, will appear in its ranks; so will men and women of the narrowest views, the most restricted sympathies, and the crudest prejudices and bigotries.

Such great English Broad Churchmen as Dean Stanley and Professor Jowett and Frederick Denison Maurice and Frederick W. Robertson and Charles Kingsley, and such American Broad Churchmen as Phillips Brooks and Heber Newton will be in your company: and rightfully, for certainly these men are religious liberals if any men of our modern times are. So also will be in it such brave thinkers and broad-minded preachers as Roger Williams the Baptist; and Bushnell the Congregationalist; and Robertson Smith the Presbyterian; and Whittier the Quaker; and Dr. Thomas the Methodist. So will Channing the Unitarian be in it; for who has done more this century to promote liberality and breadth in religious thinking than Channing? So will Theodore Parker be there, — that heroic liberal; so will Emerson, — that sublime, gentle, seraphic liberal; so will Carlyle, — that Thor-hammer among liberals. So will rise up and come forward to take a place among your great company, the Free Religionists of this country, with Francis E. Abbot and William J. Potter at their head; and surely nobody could deny their right to come. But not yet can we stop. As not less strenuously claiming a right to stand in the ranks of liberals, will appear Frederick Harrison and a band of Posi-

tivists with him; and Andrew Jackson Davis and Giles B. Stebbins with a great company of Spiritualists by their sides; and Herbert Spencer with a respectable body of Agnostics by his side; and the editors of the Boston Investigator with their following of Atheists; and Haeckel and B. F. Underwood and their fellow-Materialists; and Ingersoll with his multitude; and D. M. Bennett with his crowd.

Thus your great company of persons, all claiming to be religious liberals, will range all the way from Christian to Non-Christian, and even violent Anti-Christian; from Theist to Atheist; from Spiritualist to Materialist; from most ardent and earnest believers in and upholders of religion and churches, to sneerers and mockers at religion, and violent denouncers of churches; from real liberals, worthy the name, to men as far removed from genuine liberality in their views of truth, and in their methods of judging others, as darkness is from light.

And what is worst of all, the combative, narrow-minded men, whose whole ambition is iconoclasm, and who are liberal in nothing only in the quantity of vituperation which they hurl at churches, preachers, and religion, are very commonly the loudest in their claim of being liberals; while the real liberals, of genuine intelligence, and breadth of view, and charity towards others, whose aim is constructive rather than destructive, and who are working thoughtfully to build up a better religion instead of to tear down what religion there is in the world, — these are likely to be comparatively quiet and retiring. Thus, often the loud-voiced iconoclasts and destructionists come to be the class of men that get to be most known in our communities as Liberals; and men learn, unfortunately, when liberalism is spoken of, to think first of these men as its representatives. In this way, the cause of real liberality in religion is put in a false light, and seriously hurt.

You all know such men — such reckless destructionists — such extremists. They are very commonly the men in our communities who clamor for larger freedom, more liberty, while possessed often, seemingly, of strangely little ability to discriminate between liberty and license. They are the men who never cease vociferating in behalf of tolerance, while, alas! few persons are so intolerant as they of the views of others who differ from them. They are the men who declare, as one of them did recently in public, that Thomas Paine was a greater man than Jesus Christ; and, as for Edison, the inventor, he had done a great deal more to benefit the world than Paul had ever done. They are the men who condemn the Bible in the most sweeping and wholesale manner, while only too commonly their own ignorance of the volume they condemn — its origin, history, real character, and influence in the world — would be amusing were it not so pitiful. They are the men who declare that the Bible should be suppressed as an obscene book (because of its indelicacies, wholly incident to the age that produced it), while at the same time they are too often the stoutest defenders and justifiers of the pruriency or lust or foulness found in current literature. They are the men who are scandalized at the reading of the New Testament, or at prayers, in the public schools, but seem often to be singularly little scandalized at profanity, or, sometimes, even free love, or the sending of obscene publications through the mails. All these men claim for themselves the name of liberals; and the public, which is not very discriminating in such things, takes them at their word, and falls easily into the mistake of supposing that they are true representatives of religious liberalism in the land. And thus the cause of real liberality is made to bleed.

It will not be irrelevant if I say that this is one of the most serious difficulties that Unitarianism has to contend

with in this country. Everywhere so many people identify it in their thought with mere destructionism, and anti-religion, if not moral license! Let a Unitarian church start in any place and the so-called Liberals of all classes — many of them having no higher conception of liberalism than enmity to orthodoxy — flock to the new organization. Of course, as soon as the mere non-religionists and destructionists find their mistake, and discover that the new church means God, and means worship, and means liberty, but liberty under law and never license, and means hope of immortality, and means not overthrow of religion in any sense, but promotion of religion, — only promotion of it in enlightened, rationalized, and purified forms,— then these non-religionists and anti-religionists take their departure. But their even temporary identification with the new church has done something to strengthen the impression in the community that the church stands for the same kind of things that they stand for. And it takes time and patience and a great deal of hard work to correct the impression. It is the commonest of occurrences, particularly in the West, for persons who are essentially Unitarian in their convictions, on moving into a place where there is a Unitarian church, to stand aloof from it, and even connect themselves with churches with whose doctrinal positions they are not in sympathy, because of their misunderstanding of us, and their mistaken identification of Unitarianism with mere iconoclastic and irreligious so-called "liberalism."

Thus, we see, that there is hardly anything so important, if there is to be any real religious progress in this country, as some healthy inquiry as to what real liberalism in religion is, and some blowing away of fog, and some drawing of lines in the public thought between men and women who merely call themselves liberal, but are really full of ignorance and prejudice and uncharitableness toward

others, and men and women who are large-minded, intelligent, able to put themselves in others' places, and genuinely progressive.

Who are liberals? What is liberalism, or liberality, in religion? As the words are now used all around us, they cover, as we have seen, the widest range of meaning; and, including so much, really signify nothing. A classification that puts together Emerson and Bennett, Channing and Ingersoll, Whittier and Frederick Harrison, Frederick Robertson and Charles Bradlaugh, really is not a classification at all, but a conglomeration.

I suppose the only definition that can possibly be formed for the word "liberal" which will cover all the different kinds of people who in this country claim the name, is the purely negative one of "persons who do not believe the theological system of orthodoxy." But a negative definition of this kind is no definition at all. What is there about not believing in orthodoxy that insures that a man will be in any true sense liberal? No doubt a non-believer in orthodoxy may be genuinely liberal. But so also may a non-believer in orthodoxy be a dreadful bigot; and a bigot who claims to be liberal is the worst kind of a bigot.

The word "liberal" is a noble word. Yet it is so much abused, and so often misappropriated, that many liberal people shrink from using it. It ought to be an honor to a man to call him a liberal; and it is, if you mean by it what ought to be meant. But to call one a liberal in a sweeping way, without definition or discrimination, is simply to thrust him into the company of men of one idea, cranks and extremists of the worst type. Some real liberals say, "The name is so much abused let us give it up." But it is a question if anything would be gained by this. Any other name chosen would be abused in the same way. Every noble word is appropriated to a greater or less extent by persons who have no right to it.

The word "radical" is a striking illustration of this. A radical, properly speaking, is a root man, — a man who tries to trace all things to their root, their origin, their foundation, and so be thorough-going and sure in all his knowledge and opinions. And radical, therefore, ought to be an honorable title for any man. But as a fact it is often appropriated by men whose only care about roots seems to be to get hold of everything that is time-honored and regarded by others as sacred, and *root it up.*

In the same way the great word "progress" is very widely appropriated by men of all sorts of "isms," whose thought is anything but genuinely progressive. Every man who has a notion differing from that of the people generally, thinks it is an *advanced* notion, whereas it is quite as likely to be retrograde. When, a few years ago, a minister of a prominent Unitarian church, whom I have in mind, turned agnostic, he was spoken of by some as having reached too *advanced* a position for his church. I do not think a loss of belief in God and hope of immortality should be called an *advanced* position, but a sad and dreary *retrograde.* When we call mere motion advance, and especially when we call a giving up of the soul's highest faiths an advance, we are confusing language, and making it impossible to talk intelligibly about highest and noblest things. It is marvellous how easily people are duped with the notion that mere motion is necessarily progress, or that getting away from the common view is necessarily going forward to a more advanced view. A great deal of the so-called progress which narrow-minded, loud-voiced men everywhere shout for, is anything in the world but progress. It leads not in the direction of larger truth or higher civilization but in the exactly opposite direction.

Nor is it less true of the noble word "liberty." "O liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name!"

And if we chose to go on, we should find that there was no end to the words which men have misappropriated and abused. If we resolved to throw away all such words we should not have a good or high or noble word in the language left.

No, we need not shrink from using the word "liberal," or from inscribing it plainly upon our banners where all can see it. Our only care need be to make ourselves so really liberal as not to belie our name.

But what is it to be a liberal? I answer: —

First. It is not license. Liberality and license are no more the same than are love and lust the same. Many persons, however, have taken the name "liberalism" as a cloak to cover most unjustifiable license, and thus brought unmerited disgrace upon the liberal name. But this only makes it the more important that we who believe in liberty but not in license should do what we can to draw the line, and while we express our approbation of the one, with no less emphasis and decision express our disapprobation of the other.

The true liberal believes in liberty, but liberty within law, and more complete and perfect because within law. He believes in liberty not as an end but as a means, — and as a means whereby to reach not lower but higher ends of life. He sees that bondage of all kinds, whether political or mental, holds men and nations stationary, — keeps them from rising and going forward to better things. Hence he would destroy bondage of body and mind, and make men free, free so that — not so that they may plunge downward into vice and lust and crime — but free so that they may rise to the highest wisdom and virtue and consequent happiness that beckon to them from above. The true liberal is the man who believes in liberty as the method by which men have to rise to all highest and divinest things attainable in this life. But ever the high and divine things

are the end, and the liberty is a good only as it leads up to them. As soon as it begins to lead downward, it straightway becomes license, and is henceforth a curse.

Secondly. If liberality is not license, *neither is it indifference.* Here a great many make a mistake, and a mistake almost as fatal as the other. The difference between the liberal and the indifferent is this: A man who is genuinely liberal is liberal from conviction. The man who is indifferent is indifferent from lack of conviction. Liberality is the result of belief, — belief in higher and truer and larger things. Indifference is the result of want of belief in anything. The two classes of men are often mistaken for each other, but they are not the same. We often take it for granted that when men lose their faith in orthodoxy, they become liberal. But this is not necessarily the case at all. Men may be neither orthodox nor liberal, but mere indifferents. And that is exactly the condition that multitudes of people are in all around us. They are negative; they have let go the old, but they have not grasped any higher and larger and nobler new. The denials incident to liberalism, they like; but the affirmations — the real constructive thought, the religion — of the liberal, they care as little for as they do for the theology or religion of orthodoxy. As another has truly said, "They will go to hear Ingersoll ridicule the popular theology, laugh with him at its inhumanities and defects, applaud his somewhat coarse and easy wit, and then send their children to the nearest church on the following Sunday, to be taught what they have joined in ridiculing the week before. They call upon the representative of one church as soon as that of another for the marriage ceremony or the funeral discourse." Shall we call such men liberals? We are so short-sighted and careless as thus to call them, sometimes. But it is incorrect and unjust. They are not liberals, and we ought not to hurt the liberal cause by

identifying it in any way with such men. "They are simply indifferents. They support no ideas. The cause of religious truth owes nothing to them. They are negative, not positive. Belief implies some positive attitude of mind. Really to espouse liberal views in religion — larger views of God and the divine government; of the soul, its nature and destiny — is to love those views, to feel their value, to stand up for them, to contribute to their spread. It is more than a falling away from a traditional orthodoxy. It is rising into a new and nobler belief."

Thirdly. True liberalism is not *scorn or contempt*, or anything which contains even as an ingredient, scorn or contempt, *for any honest, earnest belief, sincerely held by any human being.*

If the lawless and the indifferent are sometimes ignorantly or carelessly classed with the liberal, so are also, sometimes, those who ridicule and scoff at the beliefs of the conservative and the unprogressive. But such scorners or scoffers are not liberals. They may have beliefs in considerable measure the same as those held by liberals. But in that which is everywhere deeper than belief and more than belief, viz., in the *spirit* that actuates them, they are not liberals, they are illiberals. Ridicule is always an illiberal thing. There can be no genuine spirit of liberality in scorn. Liberality sympathizes; liberality appreciates; liberality puts itself in another's place, and tries to look at things from that other's stand-point and judge from his stand-point. I do not mean to say that liberality always approves. It does not always approve. It sometimes condemns. But when it disapproves, it does so with sorrow, not with delight. When it condemns, it condemns not with scorn, but with pity and tenderness. That is always and everywhere the spirit of real liberality. I repeat, the true liberal never treats with contempt or ridicule any honest, earnest belief sincerely cherished by any human being.

And the same is true regarding all sincere and honest non-belief. The true religious liberal is aware that minds differ; that different persons see the same thing in different lights; that men often sincerely want to believe and cannot. And so he will always seek to do justice to honest doubt, and never condemn scepticism unless it is shallow or flippant or cynical. Regretting agnosticism, he will yet try to be fair and just to it. Lamenting the existence of atheism, he will yet prefer an honest atheist to a dishonest theist. And whatever form of non-belief or doubt a man has, if it be sincerely held, the true religious liberal will treat it with candor and fairness and respect.

Fourthly. The true liberal will not be, as to his ultimate aims, a destroyer, but *a builder.* If he destroys he will destroy, as nature does, to build again and to build better. He *will* destroy. But he will destroy in faith and love — looking forward to the better things for the sake of which he destroys. He sees that no field of wheat is ever sown until the previous weeds or other noxious growths upon the land are first overturned by the hard ploughshare. But the ploughing is justifiable because of the harvest that it means by and by. So the liberal works, making vigorous use of the iron ploughshare of truth in its time and place, to tear up soil of old beliefs often, but ever not with love of destruction, or with ultimate purpose of destruction, but for man's larger good, prompted by faith in truth, and love of humanity.

Still again. The true liberal *will see good in other forms of religion besides his own.* He will be able to see that every one of the Christian sects has a great deal of truth in its teachings, and is made up for the most part of good, honest, earnest, true-hearted people. He will be able to see that the most dark and irrational doctrines, even the worst dogmas of Calvinism, have in them a certain "soul of good;" their influence, while it has been

bad enough, has not been wholly bad. Somehow out of the soil of a Calvinism in its severest forms, some of the noblest men and noblest peoples of the modern world have sprung. No doctrine that gets and keeps a widespread and enduring sway over human minds and hearts can be wholly untrue or wholly evil. The true liberal will always bear this in mind, and will judge men and events and religions and doctrines in the light of it. Thus he will be *charitable* toward the Calvinist and the Arminian, and the Jew and the Buddhist, and Comte and Felix Adler, and Pope Leo and Dr. Patton and Mr. Moody ; not saying that all are equally good, or that all teach doctrines of equal truth, but recognizing what good there is in each, and separating between the doctrine taught and the man who teaches it.

Finally. The true religious liberal will be *very slow to say that any body of men and women who hold to views different from his* — no matter how bad the views may seem to him — *are insincere or hypocritical.* He will realize that his views seem as bad to the Evangelical as those of the Evangelical do to him. But his own he knows he holds with honesty and sincerity. Why, then, may not he believe that his Evangelical neighbor holds *his* views in a similar honest and sincere, even if not particularly intelligent, way?

There is a class of so-called liberals that perpetually make sweeping charges that the orthodox denominations know better than they say, and don't believe what they preach. But plainly he lacks in liberality who judges others in any such wholesale, uncharitable, and unjustifiable manner as that. Doubtless there are hypocrites and pretenders in all denominations, and also outside all. And doubtless, too, the condition of things now existing in the Christian world puts a pressure upon many persons to be untruthful, by making it for their interest, socially and

otherwise, to profess to believe what they do not believe. Nevertheless, we may be certain that the mass of people, both inside the churches and outside, are not hypocrites or pretenders, but honest and sincere. They may be mistaken; but the great majority mean to do right, and think they have the truth.

Is the true liberal ever to be found in an orthodox church? Yes, I have no doubt of it. Is he ever soundly "orthodox" in his religious opinions? That, perhaps, is a little like asking if a white object is ever black, or a blue, green. I think genuine "orthodoxy," as defined by the creeds and standards, rests upon an essentially illiberal basis, and comprises doctrines and beliefs which no man can intelligently and honestly hold without being in important respects bigoted and narrow. Nevertheless, I think there are a great many people in orthodox churches all about us believing themselves to be truly orthodox, who manifest a great deal of very noble and beautiful liberality; and some of them, compared with some so-called liberals, I fear would take the palm. And yet in saying this, I do not say that orthodoxy tends to make men liberal. Rather as a theology it tends to the opposite; or else all the history of Christendom is a lie.

Nor in saying what I have just said do I affirm that the religious principles of the Unitarian or the Rational Christian do not tend to make him liberal. They certainly do so tend, as history plainly proves. In the nature of the case they must so tend, for the very first principle with him is freedom to think, freedom to judge, and *respect for others in their honestly formed opinions*, which is the very essence of liberality.

Is the true liberal ever found outside of all churches? I have no doubt of it. And yet, I do not for a moment believe that genuine liberalism *tends to take* men outside of all churches. I believe that the influence of religion,

in its higher and more rational forms, and of churches, *whenever they are what churches ought to be*, is not narrowing but *widening* and *enlarging* to both *mind* and *heart;* and hence I cannot but think that within the atmosphere of such religion, and within such churches, the true liberal must ever find his most fitting and natural home. He ought to find his home there because such a rational religion and such churches are calculated to lead men to a larger manhood and a nobler freedom than they can attain alone.

I think by this time we cannot fail to see with some clearness what liberalism — *genuine* liberalism — is, and what it is not.

It may be best defined, perhaps, as a method and a spirit. It is the method of progress, growth, widening appreciation, enlarging attainment. It is the spirit of charity, sympathy, receptivity, appreciation, life. It is hope, it is faith, it is vision. It is the beating of the wings of the human spirit — that spirit which has been too long cramped by creeds and ecclesiastical fetters, the beating of its wings for a larger liberty — the liberty of "sons of God." It is the soul's prayer for light, light in place of the darkness of superstition which has so long hung like a pall over the religious world. It is a thinking, growing age, putting away timidity and fear born of distrust, — distrust of human nature, of truth, and of God, and daring to launch out upon new seas of faith in search of new and larger lands for religion to dwell in.

The true liberal is the poet, the seer, the prophet: he is the man who pierces deeper into the heart of truth than his fellows; who climbs higher heights, and so sees farther than they, — farther ahead, farther to right and left, aye, and farther back too. Ever in search of the new, he does not abandon anything that is good or true in the old. With one hand he reaches forward in hope and confidence

after the unattained, with the other he holds firmly to the attained. While he believes in fresh inspirations and fresh revelations ahead, he believes no less in the revelations behind, and with large comprehension he sings —

> "That all the good the past hath had
> Remains to make our own time glad."

Bold and fearless, he is yet the furthest possible from an iconoclast. As Dr. Holmes said of Emerson: He takes down men's idols so tenderly that they almost think his deed an act of worship.

Thus we see that it is no trivial or easy thing to be a genuine religious liberal. It is easy to be an indifferent; it is easy to be a sceptic, of a shallow kind; it is easy to be a bigot, sailing under the flag of liberalism; it is easy to be a sneerer; it is easy to be a liberal *in name*. But to be a *real* religious liberal is not easy, — it is difficult. Yet is it as *noble*, and as *well worth striving for*, as it is hard.

He who would be a true religious liberal must be a sincere man. He who would be a true liberal must be a large-minded man. He who would be a true liberal must have an imagination that will make him quick to understand others. He who would be a true liberal must have a charity that never fails. Not least in importance, he who would be a true liberal must be independent, self-poised, brave. Cowardice is poor material to make a real liberal of. Out of it indifferents, and sneerers may be formed; but not liberals. Only a brave man will dare, without the aid of spite or spunk or brag, to break with established forms of religion, and with old bigotries and prejudices. Still less will any but a self-poised and brave man dare resist the temptation to go to an extreme in his break with the old; dare withstand the crowd of breakers who rush off into violence and denunciation and unjustifi-

able iconoclasm; dare to refuse to condemn dogmatism with dogmatism; dare to stand up and say to the crowd, "I will not be an illiberal liberal, an irrational rationalist, a blind and bigoted advocate of reform and progress." It does not take a very brave, and certainly it does not take a very noble man to be an illiberal liberal; but to be a liberal who is really, genuinely, truly such, — liberal as opposed to orthodox narrowness, and also liberal as opposed to so-called "liberal" narrowness; liberal as opposed to religious bigotry, and equally liberal as opposed to anti-religious bigotry, — *that* takes a large-minded, noble, and very brave man.

Persons are sometimes afraid of being too liberal. I do not think any one can be too liberal, in the right sense of that word. Men learn to love the genuine liberal wherever he goes, just as they learn to despise the counterfeit wherever he goes. They despise the counterfeit because he is counterfeit, and because all his influence is to divide and destroy. They love the genuine because he is genuine, and because all his words and works tend to carry the world forward to a better day, — a day of clearer light, of larger charity, of growing peace on earth and good will to men.

We, as a congregation worshipping within these walls, call ourselves religious liberals. The question that concerns us all is, Are we the genuine, or only the ungenuine? I trust we are the genuine. If we are not, we must make ourselves such.

Oh, to learn true liberality of Channing! Oh, to learn it of Stanley and Robertson! Oh, to learn it from the Sermon on the Mount! Oh, to be too earnest to be an indifferent; too human to be a sneerer or a despiser of any! Oh, to be as broad and progressive and charitable as truth and love! Oh, to be able habitually to put ourselves in others' places, to see with their eyes and feel with

their hearts! Oh, to be truly Christian! Oh, to be brothers of one another; disciples of him who went about doing good; children of Him "who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust"! So shall we be liberal indeed, — with a liberality that will be a joy to ourselves, and sunshine and rain to fertilize the world.

I close with the noble words of Dean Stanley, with which I began: "Be as free, be as liberal, be as courageous as you will; but be religious because you are liberal; be devout because you are free; be pure because you are bold; cast away the works of darkness, because you are children of the light."

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of ..... dollars.

[No. 57]

Unitarianism and Original Congregationalism in New England

BY

Rev. EDWARD E. HALE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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UNITARIANISM AND ORIGINAL CONGREGATIONALISM IN NEW ENGLAND.

BY REV. EDWARD E. HALE, D.D.

To a serious person who has studied the history of America, nothing is quite so painful as the indifference with which, let me say, in average conversation, even serious men choose to speak of the Congregational churches, of their duties and of their privileges. There is at this moment a clergyman in Boston who has spoken of his taking the ordination of the Presbyterian church or throwing it off, with as much indifference as a man might speak of wearing a black necktie or a white necktie.

In point of fact, New England is New England because some thirty or forty thousand people chose to come here, in the years between 1620 and 1640, with the central view of establishing something like what we call the Congregational Church. These people, when they left home, did not know what they could or what they should do. When the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth, they had to establish their own government of Church and State; and they did so. They established what they would have called an Independent church; and, if anybody cared for such things now, it would be worth while to say that the word "independent" came into the language through such use in matters of religion and church organization, and that it was not till nearly a century later that its use was transferred to political associations.

The settlers who arrived at Salem with Higginson, under Endicott, in 1628, were of necessity another independent church. They disliked the word "Independent." The Independents of that day were, to people of the Higginson type somewhat what the people of the Salvation Army are to the worshippers in Grace Church in New York City. But the people at Salem were Christian people and the people at

Plymouth were Christian people; and they found out very early that they could "walk together," even if one set called themselves Independents, and the other did not.

When, two years later, Winthrop and the larger colony arrived, they were most eager to say that they had not separated themselves from the Church of England, that she was still their mother. All the same, they were separated by three thousand miles of water. They had not any intention of paying the slightest obedience to any official called a bishop in England. They had crossed the water precisely because they chose to escape any such control. It became their duty then to establish themselves here on an independent basis, and they did so. But they eschewed the word "Independent" precisely as Higginson and his friends in the Salem colony had done.

Before five years were over, the new churches, not ten in number, thus established by these emigrants, had created a new system of ecclesiastical order. John Cotton appears to have been the person who gave it its name: he called it the "Congregational" system. It has been known as the Congregational system from that time to this.

This system left every separate church in every separate community absolutely free to make its own arrangements for worship and for the other functions for which a church is gathered together. No church is to-day a Congregational church which does not assume this freedom and does not grant it to others.

It is interesting to observe that these Christian men, who established these churches, were so absolutely free to approach God as they chose that they declined the difficult business of defining their faith. John Winthrop and Thomas Dudley could not have agreed on any theological platform any more than John Bright and Pius IX. could have agreed. And, if any effort were made in those years to draw up any statement of Christian doctrine by any one of the ten or twelve churches of Massachusetts, it left no record behind it. Wholly conscious of such independence of opinion in the individual, these separate congregations organized themselves by making "covenants," which are wholly different from creeds. In the language of the First Church of Boston, they "solemnly and religiously promised and bound

themselves to walk in all their ways according to the rule of the gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace." As late as 1650, when the Second Church of Boston was formed, that church formed a covenant, in which they say, "We do avouch the Lord to be our God, and ourselves to be his people, to cleave to him and to one another in him; to cleave to God in Christ as our sovereign good, and to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only mediator and surety of the covenant, as our only high priest and atonement, to satisfy for us and to save us, and as our only prophet to guide and to teach us, and as our only king and lawgiver to reign over us." This covenant of the date of 1650 resembles a creed more than the earlier covenants; but it will be observed that it is simply the covenant of the Second Church of Boston.

If precedent goes for anything, then, if John Cotton and John Wilson and John Winthrop knew what they meant when they talked of a Congregational church, they meant a church which was wholly independent in its relations to other churches, of which the individual members even were wholly independent in their approach to God. They really believed that all their church members were kings and priests. This was no poetical formula to be tucked out of sight whenever it was desirable to have it in the closet. It was the theory of religion in which these men lived and moved and had their being. When, therefore, to-day, any debonair young gentleman, or any old fool of seventy, comes forward to say that, having received a call from a Presbyterian church in Grantville or in Shermantown, where he "can be of more use" than he could be in the Congregational church of which he has been the minister before, he has accepted it, he makes a statement exactly akin to what Colonel Roosevelt would have made if on the first day of July he had announced to some newspaper writer that he had accepted an appointment under the Queen of Spain and should go over, under a flag of truce, to Santiago, to serve in her army.

I am perfectly well aware that the young gentleman or the old gentleman would both say that, while this is true in historical detail, it is not true in sentiment. They would say

that the Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Church of America are now all one, that they are working for the same purposes and on the same lines. They would say that the mere detail of church government is a matter of entire indifference, as is the detail by which an Episcopal clergyman, if he does not know the history of his church, might call himself a rector, while the clergyman who does know calls himself a minister. But any reflection is enough to show that this is not true. The Presbyterian Church is handled and managed by boards of men, of whom board No. 1 receives the reports from board No. 2; and board No. 2 receives the reports from board No. 3. The real control of its operations is in the hands of elders: these elders are divided into two classes, the clergy and the ruling elders. There is usually but one of the former to each church. Of the latter there are from two to eight or ten or even more. They are usually elected for life, though sometimes for a term of years. That is to say, the Presbyterian Church is administered by an elected aristocracy. And each church in that body is subordinate to the direction of the boards made up from delegates from other churches, and it cannot help itself. It is obliged to submit to their decision.

On the other hand, each true Congregational church chooses its own officers, establishes its own ritual, sends its boys to any college it chooses, and has no power whatever over any other Congregational church.

In the middle of the last century, when Whitefield came round to the New England churches, he was very much disgusted to find that they had no statements of belief. In point of fact, a great many of them had gradually given up the Calvinistic asperities, and were what in language of that time was called Arminian,— "I know salvation's free." This absence of strict Calvinism shocked Whitefield; and he persuaded the Calvinistic ministers, of whom he found some, to make out creeds on the Calvinistic basis, which they persuaded their churches to adopt. But the institution of these creeds did not change the ecclesiastical organization by which the church itself was absolutely free to change its creed, or, if it chose, to forget its creed. Here is the reason why, in any community in Massachusetts, you will find one set of Congregationalists who have not assumed a creed, you

will find another set which have. The First and Second Congregational Churches in Boston have no creed: the Third has a creed, which from time to time it changes, as it has a right to do.

When it came to pass, in the earlier decades of this century, that the New England churches discovered that some of them were bound by Calvinistic creeds and that others were not, it was not unnatural that there should be, as there was, coquetting between the great Presbyterian body, which was absolutely Calvinistic, and those of the New England churches which had maintained some Calvinistic affinities. There were different efforts made to utilize this resemblance of doctrine. Thus the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was a fair and honorable effort to bring all the orthodox churches together into one work. But it was an effort which failed, and that board is now supported wholly by the churches of the Congregational name. They are the orthodox churches of the Congregational name, but all the same it is the Congregational name, and those churches which are under the control of the presbyteries maintain different missions.

Such efforts at uniformity with the other Calvinistic churches of America led to a good many endeavors, the result of which has been that the orthodox churches of the Congregational order are now bound together in a semi-Presbyterianism. That is to say, when a minister is to be ordained in one of them, his doctrine is inquired into, and it has to be approved by the representatives of the different churches which are called together for that purpose. Even this supremacy of a cluster of churches is, however, very slight; for the church which calls the minister has it in its power to choose any churches which it pleases to unite in the council which is to ordain the preacher. If the counsel does not choose to ordain him, the church may begin again and ask another council, and so on till it finds a council amiable enough to accept the young man's heresy. No such system as this is possible under the harder grip of the Presbyterian hierarchy.

The Unitarian churches, on the other hand, are purely independent churches. They come up precisely to the definition given by Cotton and the other early writers of

what Congregationalism really is. It is entirely in the power of any Unitarian church to vote in its annual meeting to adopt the whole Westminster Confession, as its statement of faith. As there is no person in the world who now believes the statement of the Westminster Confession, it is not at all probable that a Unitarian church will do so. But, if it should do so, there is no power existing in the Unitarian body to put that church out of its number or its councils. It is in this that the Unitarian churches differ from the orthodox Congregational churches. If you have a strong man in an orthodox pulpit, a man like Lyman Abbott or Dr. McKenzie or Dr. Gordon or Dr. Herrick in this neighborhood, he says just what he chooses, he is wholly indifferent to the creed of his own particular church or to any platform adopted by the Orthodox consociations. But, if the preacher happens to be a youngster, whose name is not generally known, if he is applying for ordination, and the council which meets does not approve of his views, why, then, all vestige of Congregationalism proper vanishes from the affair; and the power of a body of alien churches is exercised to interfere in the transactions of the congregation which has called him.

No such treatment as this is possible in the Unitarian order.

[No. 58]

UNITARIANISM:

IT IS A POSITIVE FAITH, AND RIGHTLY CLAIMS OUR LOYALTY

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

UNITARIANISM:

IT IS A POSITIVE FAITH, AND RIGHTLY CLAIMS OUR LOYALTY.

"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers; and have hope toward God. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." — Acts xxiv. 14–16.

There are ships on the sea that have a definite course to follow and an end to reach, and which follow that course and seek that end in spite of winds or tides. Then there are bodies that only float and drift, at the mercy of every breeze or sea current. So in churches there are always those who know why they are there, who have definite convictions and aims, and who intelligently and earnestly seek definite results. Then there are large numbers who possess nothing worthy to be dignified by the name of convictions, and who just drift with the social tides or as the winds of fashion or custom happen to blow. They count in the census, and help swell the population of the town; but they count for little when a cause is at stake or work is to be done. It is always the few, who know what they are and why, that make the strength of all the great movements of the world. There are thousands of Episcopalians and Baptists and Unitarians who are where they are for the same reason that a bit of drift-wood is in a particular eddy; and the next current will sweep them whitherso ever it will.

Now, in large numbers of cases this is not quite so disgraceful a fact as, at first sight, it appears to be. These people have never taken the trouble to think about it. They have not heeded the lesson so finely uttered by Hood,—

> "But evil is wrought by want of thought
> As well as want of heart."

This world has been and is the scene of an age-long conflict between the forces that lead and lift man onward and upward and those that drag downward and backward. And thousands of well-meaning people ally themselves with the armies of hindrance and reaction, because, as Jesus said of his crucifiers, "they know not what they do." It seems to me, therefore, that we can do no more important thing than now and then to ask ourselves why we are what and where we are. I propose this as the task of the morning.

The modern movement called Unitarianism, which links itself pre-eminently with the name and work of Channing, was, at the first, essentially two things.

First, it was a moral protest against what was felt to be an immoral view of God and his government of the world. The human ideal of goodness had grown to be better than the theological ideal of God. And men not only declined any longer the impossible task of worshipping a being below their own moral level, but they also refused to believe the absurdity that the source of morality was on a lower level than its high-water mark in their own hearts. First, then, Unitarianism was the indication of a moral advance.

Secondly, it was an intellectual advance. It was an assertion of the fact that humanity had come of age and was both competent and had the right to think for itself. Its father was brains: its mother was morality. So Unitarianism came to be born.

But what are we now? We want, if we can, to define our own limits, to find out what we are and why. We need to comprehend our own heritage. Is our spiritual country worth what it has cost? Is it worth the living on and taking pride in? Is it worth extending? That is, is it so much superior to others that it is worth our while to try to bring others to comprehend and share its benefits? Do we believe in it, and are we loyal to it, as we believe in and are loyal to our American political polity?

A Presbyterian or a Methodist, if you ask him what he is and why, will easily answer by handing you his published "Confession of Faith" or "The Discipline." He needs only say, "I believe that." We have no printed document quite so definite. And when we say, "It is a part of our creed not to be bound by printed words," people are apt to think that we are "all out-of-doors." And yet I think we shall find it no very difficult task to draw the lines that separate us from others and give us a distinct individuality of our own.

We are, to be sure, the right wing of conservatism and the left wing of radicalism; and we are all the grades and tendencies of thought and purpose that lie between these extremes. But so the solar system is the tiny planet that nestles closest to the sun, and also the ponderous Uranus that sweeps through its lonely circuit on the outer verge of space; but all gravitate toward and are held in poise by the central attraction and source of light. And it seems to be a part of the divine order that systems shall be bound together by invisible bonds of gravity, and not by being fenced inside certain limits of space. We are, then, as distinctly and definitely one as are those religious bodies that are shut inside the iron fences of creeds. I, for one, am persuaded that there is no denomination in Christendom that is more really and thoroughly united in thought and purpose.

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson is the author of a pamphlet on "The Sympathy of Religions." In it he shows the many and striking points of agreement among the widely diverse religions of the world. If there is this sympathy, then, between such widely sundered movements as Buddhism and Christianity, much more may we expect to find ourselves in substantial accord, on many points, with the other bodies inside Christendom.

Unitarianism, then, has points of agreement with Orthodoxy, with Science, with the Ethical Culture Movement, with Agnosticism, with Materialism, with Spiritualism, with Free Religion, with the Religion of Humanity. And yet it is neither of these alone; and we believe it is more and better, or else we are not Unitarians by any right of intelligent conviction and earnest purpose. Any one of the species of animal or vegetable life has its points of contact with and likeness to any and all other forms; and yet it is no less truly and distinctly itself.

We share with Orthodoxy our belief in God, in religion, in worship, in righteousness of life, though we may differ in our ideals of these. We share with Science our belief in the legitimacy and — some of us would say — the supremacy of her methods for the discovery of truth. We share with the Ethical Culture Societies their supreme regard for character and conduct: only, we believe we have grander bases and more commanding motives for these than they. We share with the Agnostics their profound sense of the infinity of the universe: only, we think it is too early yet to settle the limits of knowledge. We share with the Materialists their respect for hard facts, their sense of the importance of the realities and forces of this present world, and their belief that matter is good, and not evil. We share with the Spiritualists their conviction that the life is the maker of form, that the ordinary common sense of eyes and ears is no measure of the universe, and

that there may be "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of" in man's every-day philosophy. We share with the Free Religionists their respect for other faiths, and their belief that all men in all religions have been "feeling after God" as truly as have we. We share with the advocates of the Religion of Humanity their high human ideals, and their belief that no religion is good which does not lift up and lead on the race to a higher life here on earth. But no one of these alone, and not all of them together, make a Unitarian. He is these; and he is something more.

I. Let me, then, try to outline our attitude and movement.

We are theistic, and we are humanitarian; we are scientific, and we are ethical; we are religious; we believe in church and in worship. But what we are after now is a definition. Where shall we draw the lines so that they shall include just ourselves among the churches, and indicate the peculiar significance of our movement? This I will now attempt. And,

1. We believe in freedom of thought. This freedom is based on faith, and that faith is grounded in the past experience of man. We believe that human history justifies both the faith and the freedom.

All the churches of the past have inveighed against free thought as a sin; and "free thinker" has been regarded as synonymous with "infidel." They have hedged themselves about with creeds, and have declared that all divine truth was within the limits of those creeds, and only error and evil without. We believe that God is outside of all creeds as well as within, and that wherever a truth is found there is one of his footsteps.

We do not believe in freedom for its own sake or as an end. Truth is that on which men feed and grow. Whatever of good is in the world is there because, to just that

extent, men have lived the truth. Men care for the truth, and naturally seek it, because truth means life, prosperity, and progress. And we believe that men will be more likely to find this truth if they are left free to search for it. This is a commonplace everywhere else; why is it a heresy and a danger in religion?

And yet this, which seems so like common sense, has had no place in the religious thought of the past. Popes, bishops, councils, synods, conferences, all have denounced freedom as dangerous, the enemy of man, and under the curse of God. But we not only defend it as a right, we teach it as a duty. We declare it to be the atmosphere and the condition of the noblest religious life.

This seemingly strange fact that men have been afraid to think freely in religion finds a natural and satisfactory explanation when one studies how it is that creeds and forms of service have grown. In some way it came to be believed that a special formula had some special power over the gods, or had been communicated to some ancient seer as a divine secret. So long as that was adhered to, prayers and sacrifices would avail; but any departure from it would be met with failure, if not disaster. Any change, then, must of necessity be wrong. I think it was Dr. R. S. Storrs, of Brooklyn, who declared not long since that such a thing as progress in theology was absurd, because it was based on an infallible revelation. But Unitarians have dared to believe that, if we really possessed an infallible revelation, a reverent free thought would only find it out, and establish the fact more firmly in the faith of men. On any theory, then, we have dared to be free.

2. We believe in a progressive revelation. We hold that all truth is of God, as all light is of the sun. And as the day begins with a twilight, and broadens and lifts gradually and naturally toward noon, so do we believe in the advance of spiritual knowledge. The prophet, the seer,

the inspired man, is only the lofty mountain-peak that first catches and reflects the light, while the mists and shadows still creep over and obscure the valleys. Thus the inspiration is as natural as the lack of it. And as the sun that lights a mountain-top in China or India, though called by another name, is still the sun, so a spiritual or religious truth is no less truth and no less from God, whatever land first gives it utterance. We hold the man of Nazareth in supreme reverence, because we believe him to have been the supremest soul that has walked among men. We hold the Bible above all other books, because we believe it to be the loftiest peak in the world's religious literature. But it takes as much of God to explain a violet as it does to account for the mightiest of the California big trees. So in any land, and in any lowly station, wherever we find a blossom of religious reverence or of moral sweetness, there we take off the shoes from our feet, and say, "This is holy ground."

As the ocean is about the land, its tide sweeping in through every inlet, so is God about humanity; and so does the tide of his divine life sweep into our human life — into the heart as trust and love, into the brain as truth, into the life as character — just as fast and as far as we are able and ready to give it welcome. As the world grows, revelation grows. Instead, then, of looking exclusively backward for God, we look about us and forward. We greet every new sunrise, hoping ever that humanity, like the fabled statue of Memnon in Egypt, will, as the new rays smite its forehead, give forth some fresh notes of that divine song of truth that only the latest age shall see completed.

3. We believe that all truth is one. This springs of necessity out of our belief in one God and Father of all, who is above and in and through all. For this reason we are not particular to draw the lines very carefully between

secular truth and sacred. The truth about the body may concern our practical religion quite as vitally as any question about the authorship of the Gospel of John, or as to the conditions of a future life. So questions touching the world's labor or money or poverty belong to the pulpit, — not as lectures merely, but as sermons. In this we are at one with the prophets of Israel, and with Jesus, the greatest of them all. They "meddled" — as we now foolishly say — with whatever concerned the life of man, counting this the province and right of religion.

But because all truth is one in essence and source, it does not follow that it is equally important. We hold it our peculiar work to deal with that which bears most directly on the character and progress of the world. Whatever does this it is the business of the Church to study and use.

4. We believe in a good destiny for all men. This follows necessarily from the type of theism that we hold, That power and wisdom and goodness are the heart of things, — this is our faith. And if this is so, then no evil can ultimately be the destiny of any single soul.

This does not mean that all men, without regard to character or life, go to heaven immediately at death. This contradicts the universal law of cause and effect, and seems to us absurd. Sorrow is the eternal shadow of sin, and must follow it in all lives and in all worlds. But sin we hold to be a part of the life experience of all ignorant, imperfect, and progressive souls. But through knowledge, experience, and suffering, we believe it will some time, in the case of each soul, be outgrown. The very goodness of God punishes; and, through whatever course of discipline, the doom of salvation is laid upon every man. But this salvation is not in spite of character: it is character.

This, then, is Unitarianism: a church, religious, worshipful, sharing more or less the characteristics of all other organizations that try to help on the world, but marked off

from other churches by its belief in free thought, the progressive nature of revelation, the belief that all truth that touches the life of man is equally sacred, and a trust in the divine destiny of all souls.

II. Let us turn now to the question as to the positive character of our faith. The phrase, "the pale negations of Unitarianism," has passed almost into a proverb on the lips of our enemies. It is repeated *ad nauseam* that Unitarians only deny; that they tear down, and do not build up; that they have nothing to give to men in the place of what they take away. Ministers say to young men, "If you go to the Unitarian Church, they will undermine your faith in the Bible and in Christ; and then, what will you have left?" Mr. Moody said to the mother, "This free thought gives you no hope that you will ever see your lost babe again." Let us see, then. I propose to institute a little comparison between Unitarianism and the old creeds as to this question, Which has the more positive and hopeful faith? We will consider this question in its bearing on a few separate points.

1. Which of us holds a positive and hopeful faith concerning God?

The old creeds deny the perfect goodness of God. They indeed assert his goodness; but then they straightway proceed to use the word "goodness" of him in a sense different from that which it bears when they speak of men; and they outline for him a character and a course of action which not only would not be good, but which it is no exaggeration to say would be infamous on the part of any man. Then they cover up the difficulty by saying it is a divine mystery, and we must bow our heads and submit, instead of asking any questions.

While, then, they deny his goodness, we assert it. We declare that if goodness in heaven and on the part of God does not mean the same as it does here, then, for us, it

can have no meaning at all. Thus our faith here is the larger, and our position the more positive.

Our attitude, again, as to freedom of thought is a larger and more positive assertion of trust in God than that which is taught in the old creeds. Their position as to the danger of free thought is one of practical doubt, denial, and infidelity. For if free thought is dangerous, then one of two things is true. Either there is danger that we shall find something true that will discredit God and injure man, or else God has not made the mind of man competent to investigate, test, and accept truth; and either of these positions is infidelity. We believe so thoroughly in the integrity of the universe — God's work — and so thoroughly in the integrity of the human mind — God's work — that we believe no truth can ever be found that will not redound to God's glory and man's good. Here, then, our position is one of faith and positiveness; and the old one is negative, full of doubt and denial.

2. Compare our differing attitudes as to the nature and destiny of man.

The old creed teaches that man was, at the first, a perfect being, made to inhabit a perfect world.

But even then Satan gets the best of it in the contest over the new creation. He brings about man's fall, and takes for his own infernal kingdom by far the larger part of the race. I am well aware that it is commonly said that this horrible faith is now given up by all intelligent people, and even liberals sometimes deprecate anything being said about it in the pulpit. But if it is already given up by all intelligent men, then the ready inference is that only a few of the people in the churches are intelligent. It is still published in all the old creeds. Not one minister in a thousand can as yet get a position in an Orthodox pulpit, who admits a doubt of it. It is still preached, more or less frequently, in ninety-nine churches out of a hundred all

over the land. Even now a discussion is going on as to whether the saintly Sir Moses Montefiore can have gone to heaven, and all because he was a Jew.

On the other hand, we believe and preach that man is a part of the natural order of the world. However low his origin, the skies and the earth and all divine influences have cradled his birth and ministered to his development.

Under the fostering care of God, not one soul is lost; and, out of all the sin and the sorrow, he is yet to attain a destiny proportionate to the grandeur of the age-long preparation and training.

Just now the question is not which of these theories is true, but which is the more positive, the more hopeful? Which is the more creditable to God, and holds the larger trust for man?

3. Raise the same question as to the Bible.

The old creeds teach us that the Bible is the one and only infallible word of God to men. That being so, we must believe two things. First, that the Holy Spirit is capable of making mistakes, of teaching a low morality, and indorsing barbarism and wrong. Secondly, we must believe that God is partial, and deliberately leaves the larger part of his own children without light or guidance.

Our faith defends the Holy Spirit from all responsibility for human errors, and recognizes the low morality and barbarism of the Hebrews, as well as of all other nations, as a natural step in the upward development of the race. And we believe that God has sent light and comfort and guidance to all peoples and tongues in the full measure of their growing capacity to receive them.

Here, also, ours is the attitude of faith and hope; and the old creeds are the ones that teach the doubt, the denial, the infidelity.

4. One point more. Which holds the larger and more positive faith as to the Christ?

The old creeds teach that there is no natural goodness or divinity in man. So, when a man of supreme goodness appears they can only account for him by making him completely unnatural, — a monstrosity. He does not come through the gateway of human birth. He is God; he is man; he is both; he is neither.

And what is the implication of such a coming? It means the despair of God as to saving, by any natural methods, the world himself has made. It means a ruined and hopeless creation, and yet a creation by the very being who resorts to such means to save it. And even he, after this stupendous miracle of a God born and a God slain, has not succeeded, after nearly two thousand years, in making his name known or his credentials accepted by even one third of the race. If all this be true, it is the most stupendous and disastrous failure known to history.

What is our attitude toward the Christ? We believe so much in man that we hold it perfectly natural that such a man should be born. It was like him to teach, and to die as he did, for the truth. And our faith is made unspeakably stronger in the essential nobleness and high destiny of a race that is capable of producing such a character. We revere and love him, then, as incarnating the divine. And he makes it easier for us to believe that all souls, in their degree, are capable of such incarnation. He is to us, then, not the symbol of God's despair of the world, but of universal and eternal hope. For this possibility of divine sonship is, for us, a luminous illustration of the universal Fatherhood and Brotherhood.

Which position now of these two is the more positive and hopeful? Which carries with it the larger honor toward God and toward the Christ? One is mystery, darkness, and despair: the other is sunshine and undying trust.

III. One point more now demands our attention.

There are some thousands of silly people who go abroad, and, becoming impressed with the antiquity, the aristocracy, the sentimental glamour of the Old World, lose their faith in our republican ways, and fall down in worship before the idols of the past. And, all the while, wise Englishmen, like John Bright and Matthew Arnold, are looking to our representative and federal policy as their only hope for deliverance out of the difficulties that threaten them. And philosophical historians, like John Fiske, after a careful survey of all human history, are teaching us that the whole progress of the world, so far, is culminating, at last, in the political principles which we have here wrought out and adopted. Anything like a wise study of history, anything like a careful estimate of the cost, in weary searching, in experiment, in tears and blood, of our free institutions, can only issue in a deepening and strengthening of our loyalty to what, it is only simple truth to say, is the best government the world has ever seen. And this same study and estimate will convince any wise man that the hope of humanity lies in its general adoption. Those who trust humanity and love it, and who know enough to calculate the forces at work, and the tendency of progress, look forward to nothing less than the Americanization of the world.

So, just as silly and thoughtless people fall in love with Old-World politics, similar persons fall in love with Old-World religion. Thousands of trained Unitarians think it even a sign of liberality not to care what church they attend or support. If all the men and women of to-day who are in churches whose creeds they do not believe and where they do not belong should come out in a body, there would be an exodus compared with which the departure of Israel out of Egypt would be only a holiday excursion. We should, I verily believe, be the largest body in Christendom.

These people are made up of several classes. There are those who, for the time, are fascinated with the glamour of antiquity, ecclesiastical bric-à-brac. Then there are those who go for social reasons or local convenience. There are thousands who stay on where they have found out they do not belong, because it would be some inconvenience to move. There are thousands who just drift, because they have not thought much about it, or who think it is not a matter of much consequence.

But this way lies the religious hope of the world, just as clearly as America-ward lies the hope of the political and social world. The student of history is not disturbed in his conviction by the fact that the majority of the world still clings to some form of despotism. The student of science is not disturbed by the fact that the great mass of mankind is still ignorant. Both these know which way hope lies, and which way duty points every man who is wise enough to comprehend the situation. So the free and wise student of the progress of the world's religion can have no doubt as to which way lies human hope. And he who is thoughtful, serious, and wise enough to estimate the cost of our great Unitarian heritage can have no doubt of the duty of loyalty to it for the sake of future humanity.

America against the world in politics means nothing less than the higher civilization against the lower. It is the battle of man for the opportunity to be a man, — free, intelligent, self-supporting, and self-respecting. Just as truly and vitally is our Unitarianism the cause of man. It is civilization in religion against despotism and barbarism. It is freedom, faith, hope, against bondage, doubt, despair. He who sees it and is not loyal to it is traitor to the highest interests of his kind.

The history of human progress is but the story of how man, from the beginning, has struggled on and up toward the freedom, the trust, the hope we represent to-day. The

whole pathway is illumined by the burning fagots kindled about the feet of those who were the leaders of their time.

"By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvarys ever with the cross that turns not back,
And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood, God-conquered, with his face to heaven upturned.

"For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready, and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

"New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our 'Mayflower,' and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key."

I appeal, then, to all men who know aught of the cost of our Unitarian faith, who have any just estimate of its value to the world of to-day, or any clear appreciation of the relation in which it stands to the hopes of the world's future, to take their stand on the side of freedom, faith, and hope in religion, to be loyal to their grand heritage, and to do what they can to make its gospel a good news for all mankind.

APOSTLES' CREED, THE

An Analysis of its Clauses with Reference to their Credibility. By Archibald Hopkins

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4 inches; pages, 207; price, 60 cents *net*; postage, 9 cents.

A THOROUGHLY sane, thoughtful, and discriminating examination of the Apostles' Creed, clause by clause. The special treatment in this volume is that of a layman applying principles of common sense and of clear, logical, untechnical processes of thought to the problems involved. It is a fearless, sincere search after truth, without shrinking from results, and a forcible statement of conclusions and the reasons therefor, expressed in language wholly free from theological or philosophical terms. The author is iconoclastic only for the sake of becoming constructive in the end: he seeks to remove wholly the old, already crumbling structure of dogma only for the purpose of securing the foundation of a rational and more enduring religious belief. The book is, in effect, a plea for a larger, freer, intellectual outlook, and a more hopeful and inspiring religious faith than any creed can supply.

WORKS OF ORVILLE DEWEY

Size, 6 x 8 1-2; pages, 804; price, $1.00 *net*; postage, 21 cents.

THIS one-volume edition of Dewey's works, published in compliance with many requests coming from both this country and England, contains everything formerly found in the three volumes of "Works," "The Problem of Human Destiny," and "The Two Great Commandments," with the addition of a brief biographical sketch and full index of topics. It contains the ripe thought and mature experience of one of the best writers and ablest minds which American Unitarianism has produced. As a preacher of practical truth and the highest morality, with spiritual fervor and fine discrimination of motives and actions, his sermons are full of stimulating suggestions and wise counsel. With the possible exception of Dr. Channing, no person occupied a more prominent position in the early annals of American Unitarianism. Mary E. Dewey contributes a brief but comprehensive sketch of her father's life.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 59]

RATIONAL SPIRITUALITY.

BY

REV. GEORGE CROSWELL CRESSEY.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

RATIONAL SPIRITUALITY.

THROUGH language and substantially through the s[illegible] en language of man, through its symbol the word, w[illegible] enabled to communicate our thoughts to others, and thus arises intercourse between man and man.

Yet this is more limited and imperfect than we sometimes suppose. There are several stages or processes in this inter-communication, in all of which error or inaccuracy may appear. Words stand for certain ideas, but it does not follow that all individual ideas, though well defined in the mind where they originate, can enjoy a complete expression, — it may be from the imperfection of language, it may be also from lack of formulating facility in the person himself.

As a matter of fact, indeed, it is not easy to convey even with approximate accuracy and completeness a series of conceptions from one mind to another. Language may not wholly express the desired thought, and words standing for different shades of meaning to different individuals may leave in the mind of the recipient a significance varying somewhat from that which they first assumed in the mind of the speaker or writer; hence misunderstanding, misapprehension, disagreement, and occasionally wholly diverse ideas in various minds concerning the significance of some term, even that of one used with greater or less frequency in common language and everyday life. Of this sort I conceive the term "spiritual" to be.

People talk at random of spirituality, spiritual-mindedness, of a spiritual man or spiritual men: and though there is a certain vague idea which the word doubtless conveys to every mind, there are probably no two practical definitions which at all agree; and in the case of many it would be hard work to focus mental light enough on the point to get any exact or apprehensible explanation of the word. Those are called spiritual in whose spirituality, or the alleged fruit thereof, even stupidity has a large share. Whatever there be worthy the epithet which finds its chief witness in religious sentimentality, is of a most shallow nature. One may be a mystic too, and not be spiritual; one may be eminently spiritual, yet at the same time be as far as possible from the mystic.

Without going farther into various popular notions of the meaning of the word, let us notice the cause of this divergence of estimate and opinion. In general it may be said, perhaps, that the adjective inherits much of the indefiniteness of the noun from which it is derived. There is not the slightest obscurity of significance in the terms "bodily" or "corporeal." We know the body, at least as an entity; but spirit, what is it?

Practically, however, the difficulty, the cause of disagreement, lies, I think, in the fact that it is not a simple but a compound or, at least, a complex attribute of character. Such adjectives as "kind," "gentle," "benevolent," "sympathetic," "virtuous," "sincere," stand for characteristics which are units in themselves. We may not be able possibly to give an exact definition, which of itself proves nothing. All concur in regard to their meaning, and all recognize and agree on their personal exemplifications.

In the term "spiritual," on the other hand, there appear to be several elements, all of which are necessary to the quality in its fulness, — elements which may be said in

general to coincide with, and respectively to belong to, the three divisions of the human mind psychologically analyzed, — the Intellect, the Feeling, and the Will.

The element in spirituality which belongs to the first, to the Intellect, we may designate as *Rational Conviction*. In using the expression it is not intended, of course, to establish any fixed objective standard of rationality. This would be unjust, if not impossible. The standard is rather subjective. Rational, as here employed, signifies that belief which comes from reason and reflection, as distinguished from that practical conviction which may often be the result of mere impulse, excitement, or enthusiasm.

There is a vast amount of such conviction in the world which is irrational. There is also an equal amount of reason which lacks the positiveness of conviction.

In the analysis of the human mind, intellect is the basis, the foundation logically of the whole, and the first in analysis; so in spirituality, whatever we may find it to be as a totality, as a complete quality, the intellectual comes first, — *Conviction* and *Rational* Conviction.

While, however, for universal application the standard of rationality must be subjective, it may be fairly said that views may be held so irrational objectively in the light of present progress as to be inconsistent with or to vitiate spirituality. What was rational comparatively in the current philosophies of Antiquity or the Middle Ages — rational in so far at least as was indicated by the nature of the minds which conceived them — in our noonday blaze of knowledge must not only prove an intellect untrustworthy, but also show the absence of some other quality essential to the highest spiritual life. Although a man may be moral, good, technically or even really in spirit a Christian, while holding the heinous theories of legalism, making morals mathematics, and mercy miracle or magic, yet there can be but little of the truly spiritual

about him. All totally irrational convictions which become rooted in the mind, must give a form to thought which is incompatible with the most elevating precepts of humanity.

On the other hand, there is reason without conviction, which is equally fatal. Perfectly rational views may be held, there may be a cast of mind which easily discriminates between the natural and the unnatural; but unless there be something beside a mere surface growth of ideas, something which takes root and becomes a factor in the outlinement of action, there is no positive product of character. To be spiritual, man must have some definite views of human life, some firm and rational convictions of the relations of men and their duties to one another, and, most important of all, of his own personal obligations to the world. It may not be necessary to have any written or carefully defined religious creed, or to subscribe to any system of theology; but there must be what is far deeper and more abiding, a belief in human need and in the power and responsibility of each one in his or her own sphere to minister thereto.

The second element in true spirituality — that which represents Feeling, the second of the divisions of the human mind — is *Reverence*. In this respect men are differently constituted. To some it is inborn and natural; by others it must be acquired. But nothing is more to be condemned than the flippant, frivolous treatment of sacred themes, the bantering jest which reduces all subjects to the level of persiflage. We may not respect the ideas of certain men respecting the mysteries and problems of life, but the mysteries and problems themselves are no less the objects of reverence and of awe. The pedantic bigot who claims to solve all questions, and is amazed that the world will not accept his conclusions, occupies one extreme; at the other stands the chattering trifler, who laughs at the

dense shadows on the background of life and the mists which overhang its future. Both are irreverent, — the former, because he sees nothing above and beyond himself; the latter, because he sees nothing except himself.

The spiritual man, in the language of Scripture, must be "in subjection to the Father of Spirits." He must recognize and feel the presence of God, — of an Almighty Power in nature, in history, and in life. Callous indeed to sentiment as well as religion is he who can look even upon the quiet scenes of nature — on the solitude of the forest, the measureless surface of the ocean, or the majestic pathway of the stars — without a sense of the silent and ceaseless Power which is behind and in all. But the truly reverent man will discern and feel this power yet more fully in the noiseless workings of his own soul, in the quiet progress of mankind amid the actions and interactions of individual and social life.

Genuine reverence for God leads also to reverence for man, for the essential worth and power of every soul, for the great men of earth, not so much for themselves as persons as for the great mental and moral ideas which they represent, of which in a certain measure in popular thought they are the type and expression. It tends also to the abrogation of dogmatism, to a spirit of tolerance, of respect for the opinions and convictions of others. For if a man have any right, it is to his own belief on those matters concerning which men have always differed; and whole volumes, aye, libraries of history, and the sufferings of entire races attest the futility and folly of the attempt to chain and coerce belief, and to drag captive at the chariot-wheels of dogma the lawful and irrepressible forces of free thought. The man who respects his fellowmen and holds his Creator in reverence, will not deny to others the right he exercises for himself. The spiritual-minded man, while he may seek to convince others, will

never attempt coercion, either by fear or by any systematic, artificial play upon the emotions of the heart. Persuasion, not force, will be his weapon. The ecclesiastical devotee who says, "I am right, but you are wrong; my way is the only way; I shall reach Heaven, but you will be left out, unless you accept my doctrine,"— he who says this and thoroughly believes it, — for if insincere, he is certainly beyond the pale of any sort of spirituality, — he who believes this and acts it out, as he must, in every-day conduct, can lay no claim to the highest spiritual life, though he know the catechism and Bible by heart and live up to every commandment in the decalogue. Reverence for spirit, both infinite and finite, is indispensable to spirituality of thought and life; and it is this feature which is most marked in all who are genuinely spiritual.

We have already the elements which correspond to the intellect and the feeling, — the intellectual and emotional elements; there remains the third, that corresponding to the Will, — namely, *Consecration to Duty.*

There are two kinds of morality, — the morality of expediency and the morality of principle. The former is simply a recognition of public sentiment, a drifting along with the current, a transfer of selfishness to a more refined plane. It is unnecessary to add that this sort has no vital or energizing power. So long as the sea is calm and the winds favorable, so long as interest dictates morality or even charity, all is apparently well. But let right and interest conflict, let a little effort be required to ascertain what the right course is, let it be very convenient to close the eyes and allow matters to adjust themselves, let stanch adherence to moral and Christian principle involve financial loss or social embarrassment, and the false foundations of conduct are at once discovered. The worm-eaten barriers of expedient morality fall to the ground before the claims of self-interest.

The existence in society of this fair-weather morality is no figment of the imagination, no philosophical spectre. The world is fairly honey-combed with it. It is a fountain of corruption and a source of constant danger. Its sole recommendation is, that by its very existence it implies a strong moral public sentiment based on intelligence and principle, which makes morality useful and religion and charity expedient.

Spirituality, on the other hand, demands a morality of principle, a consecration to duty, motives of action which lie beneath the outer relations of men and are superior to any claim of circumstances, — a fixed choice which directs all minor volitions and gives a decided trend to life.

The deepest streams most suddenly rise and overflow their banks. The deepest spirituality, too, is not of a negative, restful type, a slow, placid, sluggish current. It is of a positive, active, energetic character, which has not only convictions of reason, reverence, and respect for God and man, but also a daring enterprise, the boldness of faith, the assurance of hope, and the vitality of constant work; not only a sound intellect and a good heart, but a consecrated will, which gives a momentum to personal virtue, and helps on by its strength the mightiest currents of progress.

Rational Spirituality is thus lifted above any loose and popular conceptions which may attach themselves to the word. It represents no maudlin sentiment, placid endurance, or pretentious pietism; it is rather a strong, active, grand attribute of man, having its legitimate relation to every part of his complex nature, which yet as a single attribute grasps his entire being, and lifts him to an ever higher plane of living. It demands, in the language of the Apostle, a presentation of ourselves "a living sacrifice to God," a complete consecration to the work of life, viewed in the light of reason and in the sense of reverence, "which is our spiritual service."

In this apprehension of Truth by the man and the apprehension of the whole man by the Truth is realized thus the highest spiritual vision, the true significance of "seeing with the spiritual eye." Raised to this lofty sphere of thought and life, the distinct mental processes disappear from view, the soul has surmounted the mists of doubt and uncertainty into a cloudless sky with its ever-widening circle of horizon, and there comes to it the highest truth as an instinct and an intuition. And thus knowledge, so far from being irrational and untrustworthy, is the very consummation of reason and rationality, the most complete and absolute knowledge to which man may attain.

It seems natural, then, to think of Rational Spirituality as an adjunct of Rational Religion. Independent as it is of dogma, the result of sincerity of belief rather than of any special form of doctrine, it ought to prevail with exceptional vigor among those of the Liberal faith. If it were an unnatural, miraculous gift to man, not a growth from within according to law, but a baptism from without from some supernatural source, we might look to the rigid creeds of Orthodoxy as its source and foundation. But if it be, as it is, a natural characteristic of a properly developed man, a quality based upon reason and drawing its strength from all the departments of the human constitution and all the natural, legitimate purposes of human life, then the aims, methods, and principles of Liberal Christianity must be best adapted to advance its cause and to preserve its purity. Although recent political events have brought alliteration into disrepute, I venture to affirm that Radicalism, Reverence, and Religion ought to move hand in hand; not the Radicalism, falsely called such, which destroys for the sake of destruction, which takes cognizance of a part only, and not of all the facts of life and experience, but that sound Radicalism which

penetrates to the root, which, without obtrusion or antagonism, seeks the truth; the Reverence which respects it, and the Religion which practises it.

Of the value of this element of character it seems superfluous to speak. On some clear evening when the stars shrink back before the pathway of the ascending moon, and night is almost transformed to day, we are moved to admiration and pleasure; yet all this attractive light, focused to the smallest compass, could not dissolve the most delicate petal of frost or melt the tiniest snowflake. Such is Science without Sentiment, the Intellect without the Heart, Religion without Spirituality. But on the other hand, point out the church which combines both, which is purely rational, yet deeply religious; which is perfectly tolerant and catholic; which yet extends its fraternal hand to the needy, oppressed, and down-trodden of every class; which is bound to no creed whatsoever, but is genuinely, rationally, vitally spiritual, — point out such a church, and you have seen that which is to foster the liberty and preserve the welfare of America when the western prairies and territories shall be populous as the State of Massachusetts, — a church which is still to flourish and irradiate its blessings when all the golden dreams of Science shall have been more than realized; which is still to warm the heart and control the will of man when his intellect in future ages shall tower to its grandest height.

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[No. 60]

KEEP THE BIBLE.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

Perhaps you have been brought up to believe that the whole Bible was directly inspired by the Almighty, that everything within those lids is the word of God. At last you discover that the Bible history of the creation contains manifest errors; that the geology of the Bible does not correspond with the discoveries of science; that many actions attributed to the patriarchs are inconsistent with sound morality; that there are impossible miracles asserted and irrational doctrines taught in this great collection of Hebrew literature. You therefore cease to accept the whole Bible as divine. That is your duty: you cannot help it. But, if you stop with that negation, you have merely lost a part of your old faith. One of the props of your life is gone. Do not stop there. This mere negation has not set you free. The letter of the Bible has ceased to be inspired: learn to see more of inspiration in its spirit. Read it again, to learn why this book, containing such errors, has yet been the food of the soul to countless generations, has roused the noblest sentiments of man, has been a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, has been the liturgy of nations, the fountain of glad hymns in the hour of joy, of prayers in sorrow; has brought comfort to sad hearts, the sense

of a divine presence and a blessed immortality to bereavement. When you cast aside the false inspiration of the letter, find the real inspiration behind the letter. And let the sight of those inspired souls, Isaiah and Moses, Samuel and Paul,—leaders of men,—help you to see divine inspiration outside of the Bible also in other great manly and womanly hearts. When you see how God spoke to those sublime souls, learn to believe that he also speaks to us to-day. Believe that the exulting and abounding river of life which pours through the pages of the Bible is still rolling on to-day. Seeing how Moses and Elijah were inspired to rebuke kings and lead nations, let us be sure that it was by the same divine power that Abraham Lincoln was raised up to guide our own nation through its Red Sea to the Promised Land; that Washington was as truly sent as Joshua; that Milton and Channing drank from the same fountain of inspiration with the apostle Paul. Then we shall really believe that every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Light. Then we shall be set free from the bondage of the letter, and be able to open our souls to the coming of the everlasting Spirit, which moves where it will, creating light and life in the midst of darkness and the shadow of death.

Longer tracts on many subjects may be had free by addressing the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

[No. 61]

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCH
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

What do the Evangelical Denominations hold in Common?

BY

Rev. WILLIAM H. LYON, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
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WHAT DO THE EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS HOLD IN COMMON?

BY REV. WILLIAM H. LYON, D.D.

The question "What do the Evangelical denominations hold in common?" is a very difficult one to answer. It would be difficult for them to answer it themselves; it is doubly so for any one not in the close touch with their thought which membership in one of their communions involves.

It is very clear that the whole Evangelical belief is in process of change. It is sliding down like a glacier from the cold and isolated heights of dogma to the warm and fruitful valleys where are the homes and business of living men. The rapidity of the change varies in different denominations and in their different churches or leaders. In the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Congregational bodies especially, the variety of belief is very great, in many cases greater than the difference between each other. The present controversy over ritualism in the Anglican Church has called fresh attention to the curious fact that there is a wider divergence between the two parties than between the ritualist and the Roman Catholic or between the anti-ritualist and the liberal Christian. Obviously, it is hard to say what several bodies hold in common, when it is hard to find what some of them hold individually. There are also points of doctrine as to which single sects differ from all the rest,— points which their holders consider important enough to justify their separate existence, and even, in some cases, their refusal to co-operate in any religious undertaking whatever. Such, for instance, is the Episcopalian's idea of the Church. This keeps his sect from almost any fellowship with other Evangelical bodies, and prevents his ministers from exchanging or even worshipping with their ministers.

The matter is still farther complicated by the divergence between the original and still plain meaning of some Evangelical creeds and the construction which their adherents put upon them. Striking instances are the assertion of Newman and his fellows in the Tractarian controversy that the Thirty-nine Articles contain the very doctrines which they were framed to deny, and the pathetic failure of the articles of faith of the Andover Seminary to keep out of that institution the liberal tendency which it was established to counteract. There seems to be almost no limit to the power of reverent and loyal progress to read into a creed or a text its own belief. However inseparable from, if not necessary to, intellectual advancement this process may be, it renders an account of the religious beliefs of any age very difficult.

Yet, if we strike an average among the various Evangelical denominations, we may, with tolerable safety, set forth a few points as being commonly held by them.

They believe that the Bible is the ultimate source of knowledge on religious subjects. It contains all the truth that is necessary to salvation. It was given by a process of inspiration which varies essentially from that by which any other range of truth is furnished. The men through whom it was given were selected by divine wisdom for a peculiar task; and the results of their obedience have been gathered into one book, which is unique in literature, supernatural, and to be read with a degree of reverence which can be claimed by no other volume. That it is infallible in every word, few are hardy enough now to claim; but there are those who do claim it, and they seem logically to have the advantage of those who assert both a divine and a human element, but give no criterion by which the two may be discerned. The common view is well stated in the first article of this summary of faith set forth by the Evangelical Alliance in 1846, and adopted by the American Branch in 1867,— "The divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures."

The Evangelical bodies agree also in the doctrine of the Triune God, which involves the Deity of Jesus Christ. Among some of the more liberally inclined may be detected a tendency to substitute the word "Divinity" for "Deity," implying apparently that it is a quality shared by men in

general, or at least by spiritually-minded men. This, however, seems to be exceptional and to be confined to the extreme left wing. On no point are Evangelicals, even of a liberal type, more at one than upon the strict and unique Deity of Jesus Christ, implying thereby a supernatural and altogether exceptional position and quality as distinguished from mankind.

The supernatural quality in the person of Christ is commonly held to pervade his action upon men. Whether influencing man by faith in the atonement or through the sacraments of the Church, there is held to be something exceptional in the communication of divine grace. The religious life is something else than doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. It is a special relation with God, a life outside the common life, possessed of qualities, privileges, and hopes which are not shared by those of different belief or faith. In technical language, those who have attained this peculiar relation to God are "saved." The rest of mankind are "lost."

This brings us to one more point upon which the Evangelical bodies are united,— the condition of the dead. As mankind in this life are divided into the believers and the unbelievers, so hereafter they will be divided between heaven and hell. At death, or, as some hold, at a distant judgment, the race will fall apart into two unchangeable bodies, the one rewarded with eternal happiness, the other punished with eternal misery. There are no gradations in the two fates. No distinctions of character or motive are allowed to influence this absolute division on the ground of faith. The apparent shades of goodness and wickedness which we consider in our moral and even legal judgment have no meaning in the final assize. The supernatural quality found in the Bible, in Christ, and in the religious man, determines, and is the only thing that does determine, the allotment of happiness or misery hereafter. This allotment is unalterable. The dead are "fixed in an eternal state." A respectable minority among Evangelicals will protest against this statement of their position, and it must be admitted that it is falling silently into disuse. Yet it still stands in most of the creeds; and, as in the matter of foreign missions, it is still a motive to action.

The whole Evangelical position, so far as it remains intact and self-consistent, may be stated as reliance upon miracle, while the liberal position is based upon trust in the natural order of the world. What are called miracles in common language — that is, interferences of God in the common order of nature through the action of Biblical personages — are but illustrations of God's habitual method of procedure. The traces of divine power are sought, not in general literature, but in a supernatural book; not in history and in human character as a whole, but in Jesus Christ and in the thin line of the Jewish and Christian dispensations; not in the natural development of character into its due variety and fate, but in the arbitrary separation of souls upon a single issue. It must be repeated that the Evangelical scheme of salvation is crumbling and melting away; but as distinguished from the liberal position, and considered as uninfluenced by the increasingly liberal atmosphere, this is its essence. That God cannot be seen with sufficient clearness to be effective in human history and literature, and in the working of the moral laws in general life, but must be concentrated in unique and supernatural persons, events, and writings to impress the soul, is essentially what Evangelical denominations, as judged by the standards which they still carry, hold in common.

PIONEERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Being the Great and Thursday Lectures Delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three

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The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

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[No. 62]

RELIGION ITS OWN EVIDENCE.

BY

REV. GEORGE BATCHELOR.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON

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onward and upward forever.

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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

RELIGION ITS OWN EVIDENCE.

As the substance, of which all religions are specific forms, religion may be considered without reference to the "Christian evidences." Being an independent manifestation of human nature going through certain peculiar experiences, it may be regarded as having a basis of its own, without reference to an "ethical basis" or a "scientific basis." These latter are the foundations of science and ethics, — two great classifications of observed human experience which cannot be confounded with religion or with one another, without confusion of thought.

What, then, is religion? It is a definite form of experience resulting from the necessary contact of human beings with the system of things of which they form a part. It is the object of this essay to show in part the nature of this experience, to note some of its successive phases, with the emotions excited, and their characteristic forms of expression.

1. Power. The first experience of every child brings it into more or less conscious relations with energy in its various forms. When it would lift its tiny hand, an unseen power pulls it down again. When it essays to rise upon its tender feet, the power drags it back, and will not let it stand and walk until it has found within itself some capacity of resistance, in the force of its own will and the energy which comes under its own control. Continuing its contention with Power, it finds each day a larger

measure of energy at its disposal, together with greater flexibility and control of the organs through which it is exerted. It learns to walk, ride, climb, swim, work. (The Power forbids it to fly.) Every new experience reveals a new mode of the omnipresent energy. In the forest, on the shore of the ocean, — wherever air and water moved in wind and storm and pleasant breeze; in the earthquake and the volcano; in the changes of the seasons and all such phenomena of Nature greatly affecting his life, — man constantly and anxiously watched the exhibition of Power, and compared it with the strength given to himself; measured the little force which came within the limits of his personality with the power with which he had to do, and decided that the contest was too unequal. He was helpless in the grasp of Power upon which he was absolutely dependent.

In low forms of social development, — represented, for example, by Browning's Caliban, — the Power (whether called He or It) is regarded as something which can hurt or help; which indeed contains within its unknown potency all possible hurt or help which may come from benignant skies or baleful pestilence, from fruitful earth or demonic power ravaging the earth and destroying life and the means of life. Caliban

> "Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
> And we shall have to live in fear of Him
> So long as He lives, keeps His strength; no change,
> If he have done his best, make no new world
> To please him more, so leave off watching this, —
> If he surprise not even the quiet self
> Some strange day, — or suppose, grow into it
> As grubs grow into butterflies; else, here are we,
> And there is He, and nowhere help at all."

Caliban has a very vivid conception of power and of his dependence on it; and this sense, mean and bare though

it be, is the root of religion. This sense of dependence on power accompanies man as he rises through all the grades of developing life until he attains to the most sublime conceptions of his relations to Omnipotence. By some, it has been made the essence of all religion. It is an element in all religious experience, because man can never escape it; but it is a principal element only in the lower forms of nature worship and fetichism. When once it had shaped itself in the human mind as a source of emotion, religion began to be, and worship in its rudest form was instituted.

Summary. There has been made upon the sensitive nature of man an impression that we are dependent upon Power which we cannot live without, cannot escape, and cannot successfully resist. This impression has been continually made and constantly repeated in striking forms until it has become hereditary and instinctive. It is the first element in the religious consciousness of the race; and, without a doubt, it is universal.

The principal emotions excited are hope and fear.

The characteristic is dependence.

2. Mystery. Not long after human beings begin to establish conscious relations with Power, there comes the perception of mystery.

What is mystery? It is that form of human knowledge in which the known reveals the existence and presence, but not the nature, of the unknown. If there be no knowledge, there can be no mystery. If there be perfect knowledge, there can be no mystery. The mysterious is that of which one knows something, enough to know that there is more out of sight which might be known if one had opportunity. It is said that mystery is the child of ignorance and the imagination. But whatever is wholly imaginary is no mystery. A real mystery begins in the known, — a

solid bridge of fact over which we advance to the knowledge of the unknown. Rightly comprehended, mystery is the mother of science. Wrongly taken, it is the prolific source of superstition. No man can know that any mystery is inscrutable. His half knowledge is a challenge to investigation, and an omen of success. Where knowledge cannot go, the imagination can; and, if any mystery should ever be regarded as beyond the reach of the intellect of man, that would speedily become the centre about which superstitions would begin to group themselves.

In the early days of human development, the imagination of man was powerfully stimulated by the presence of the unknown. His intellect was excited, and his emotions aroused in the attempt to find out what lay outside of and beyond that which he saw.

Everything that he learned to know quickly conducted him to something which he did not know. The force of gravity, the power of the sunshine, storms, sleep, dreams, birth, life, sorrow, joy, disease, death, — all such things in experience brought him into the presence of mystery which excited his intelligence and stimulated his curiosity, while it increased his hopes and his fears. He penetrated each mystery with ease, only to find it deepen at every step of his advance. His imagination began to fill the unknown with things fit to satisfy his hopes and account for his fears. He began to imagine beings capable of wielding and controlling the mighty forces which were at work around him. The darkness he peopled with the creatures of his dreams; and, beyond the void of death, his desire prompted him to build for himself a refuge. Religion began to be something more than a hope or a fear attaching itself to the Power in the grasp of which all life is held. The gloom and awe of the deepening mystery of life and that which includes life began to press upon the imagination. In India and in Egypt, in the most ancient

historic times, the eternal Presence and the inscrutable Power had become the themes of contemplation; and, in sublime forms of speech, worshippers had begun to describe the mystery of existence, and worship had begun to take on dignity.

Herbert Spencer finds in this sense of mystery the ground and essence of religion. Undoubtedly, it always has been and always will be a powerful stimulus to the religious imagination, and will continue to be, as it has been, the constant cause of awe and wonder. But the low, and not the high, forms of religion have been created by it. Persia, Greece, and Rome advanced to a higher and broader thought by giving place to a new experience which came next in order, as man thought about himself and the universe of which he was a part.

Summary. There has been made upon the sensitive nature of man the impression that around the known in human life is a greater unknown, in which are the sources of that which hurts or helps, and which it behooves man to comprehend; and there has grown up a great longing to have personal relations with the source of life.

The principal emotions excited are hope and fear, curiosity and wonder.

The characteristic is wonder.

3. Wisdom. An early discovery was that in the mystery order was to be observed: that Power seemed to be controlled; that effect was linked to cause; that there was an orderly sequence of events to be learned and predicted; that whatever was clearly beyond human control seemed to come under the control of some other will or mind or power. Man thought he saw signs of thought, plan, purpose, intelligence, something akin to his intellectual life. The thought grew upon him that the mysterious Power

was alive and knew. He began to wonder if the human mind was not the offspring of an unseen Mind, and human wisdom the inspiration of an unseen Wisdom. He found it impossible to believe that in the amazing universe which he began to know man was the only intelligence, the only living being, the only thinker. Something had power; and no argument, however ingenious, has ever been so framed as to convince him that, if man should cease to be, all consciousness would vanish from the universe; that nothing would then be alive and aware of the wonderful processes which excited his admiration the more, the more he knew them. His anthropomorphic reasoning was: "I came out of the Power, I am like the Power. Therefore, the Power is like me, but vaster." Rude and imperfect reasoning it was. It has given the philosophers cause for merriment ever since. But the impression made has never been removed, and it has powerfully affected the common life of the race. Whether there be good reason for the belief or not, the impression is strong that there is a Wisdom which includes, if it do not inspire, our wisdom, and a Consciousness which includes, if it do not cause, our consciousness. The nature of the universe is such as to make this impression upon the unfolding mind of man. When he began to think thus of the mystery of the universe, man took on new relations with his Maker, whether regarded as He or It. When he began to believe that the Power which he could neither escape nor resist was itself under the control of wisdom, the superstitions which had grown up as partial forms of knowledge began to disappear. With the awe and wonder of the conception, a great reverence awoke. He began to worship the Wisdom, to regard it as infinite and eternal, and by that worship his own nature was dignified. Religion, in many forms, had already founded many institutions. The gods were already on their thrones, and for ages had ruled the world through

the hopes and fears, awe and wonder, of mankind. But now religion took on nobler forms. Fears were dispelled, hopes were dignified, and superstitions began to take their flight. Theism began to be, as a direct result of the apparent revelation of wisdom as a controlling power in the affairs of men. As knowledge has increased, theistic belief and worship have expanded; and great strength, steadiness, and courage have come into human life as the consequences of reliance upon infinite Wisdom.

Summary. The impression made upon the sensitive nature of man by the facts of experience has been that there is a Wisdom greater than human wisdom and a Consciousness other than human consciousness. By an impulse never accounted for, man began to worship the Wisdom; and the impulse has become hereditary and instinctive.

The principal emotions excited are fear, hope, wonder, curiosity, awe, and reverence.

The characteristic is reverence.

4. Justice. About this time, whether before or after we cannot tell, another question was suggested to man by the facts of his experience. From other sources and through other experiences there had come to him a conception of justice. He had begun to talk about right and wrong in human relations, and to insist upon fair play among those who were bound to one another by their social necessities. The suspicion was early excited that the Power, the Mystery, the Wisdom, not only acted according to the laws of thought, but also took note of these human relations of right and wrong among men. It seemed to favor that which men called good, and to oppose that which men called evil. If one attempted to be unjust to his fellows, there was a suspicion that he might have to answer for his fault to other than human opponents. There

were many seeming exceptions to the rule; but the wisest men agreed that it looked that way. Long before, men had been convinced that the Power had its favorites among men, serving some and destroying others. Now they began to wonder whether this was the reason for it; whether it was always on the right side, because it was right. Bolder thoughts began to suggest themselves: The Wisdom itself, — was it just? Did it so order its relations to the creatures who were in its power as to give them fair opportunity? Were its gifts rewards, and were its injuries punishments, and were they fairly distributed? Further than that went the questions of the ancient worshipper. Was the Wisdom itself true and righteous, itself the source of truth and righteousness? Hitherto, fear had controlled man, who, because he dared not do otherwise, had prostrated himself before the supreme Power. Now there seemed to be notable hints that man might stand erect in the consciousness that he who was the Judge of all the earth would himself do right, and that, doing right, man need have no fear of him whom he called God. Inexpressible was the relief when religion began to take on this ethical form. Justice in human relations received overwhelming reinforcement, all human virtues received new sanctions, and all the relations of man to man were dignified by the belief that man entered into similar relations with the sublime object of his worship, the Being from whom he received his life and strength and such wisdom as he had.

Doubts still arose, and have never been wholly set at rest, because it is clear that in many ways the divine in its methods is unlike the human administration of justice. Many events seemed to contradict the assertion of absolute justice. Sometimes God seemed capricious and cruel. Sometimes he seemed to have favorites whom he loaded with undeserved favors; while upon others, blameless of

wrong, he heaped calamity. But out of large experience and a wider generalization there came great flashes of conviction that, on the whole, in a large way, the Power does right, — that it is intelligent and it is just. The great ways of Providence carried conviction that bridged the doubt, and encouraged the worshipper to believe that this seeming wrong was only part of the mystery to be made clear when all was understood. The singular fact was noted, which greatly confirmed the faith of the worshipper, that they who most eagerly doubted the divine justice were not those who had suffered most. Out of the holiday experience of men came the loudest complaints. Out of the sorrows of men came the faith and hope, the great psalms of praise and the great prayers of trust.

The main course of human experience suggested the idea of the divine justice, and yet it did not force itself on the attention as do the fact and exertion of power. It waits for a higher intelligence in man. It comes out of a more complicated experience, and depends more upon the moral state of the observer. But, a certain stage of development being reached, it never fails to suggest itself; and, when once it enters the mind, religion receives new interpretation and takes on new functions. By a curious confusion of thought (so great is the force of this impression), they who think it wise to deny that the mysterious Power is wise or intelligent, still often assert an infinite principle of justice, a supreme and awful principle, to which all intelligent creatures must bow.

Summary. Upon the sensitive nature of man the impression has been often made, and in striking forms, that right is not a human law alone, but is part of the nature of things. The impression has become hereditary and instinctive, and powerfully impels men to worship the Being who is conceived as the source of all right and justice.

The emotions excited are fear, hope, wonder, curiosity, awe, reverence, obligation, and loyalty.

The characteristic is loyalty.

5. Goodness. All the joyous acts of life, all its bright, glad, noble experiences, suggest the conviction that the Power feels as we do, or at least desires *us* to feel as we do; that it is sympathetic, that it wishes well to man. The sense of loyalty to a Power which is as just as it is powerful, the reverence which awoke when the infinite Wisdom was revealed, easily shape themselves into loving admiration and affectionate regard. Man, in the full enjoyment of his strength, regarding the beautiful aspects of Nature and eagerly partaking of its bounty, seeing in the mystery of Nature a source of life, light, and joy, was easily excited to love and gratitude. The conviction that the Power is good was not to be resisted. To it the good man gladly yielded; and, doing so, a great joy, unknown before, came into his life. He had for ages been gathering strength and courage. New hopes had come to comfort him. Hints of greater things coming on for him out of the mystery of being had given dignity to his character. Loyalty to the right had given him great ambitions and inspirations. But, when upon his mind broke the fulness of the conviction that God was good, a new source of happiness and a new motive to action took possession of his sensitive nature and active powers. Loyalty to the Power which was just flamed up into love for the Power that was good.

Doubts afterward arose because the course of human experience is not uniform. Sorrow often came to cloud the sky of human life. But after sorrow, and often out of sorrow itself, there came great flashes of conviction that the Power wishes well to man. The wonder of it was that the deeper the experience of pain and sorrow,

the more assured the confidence that goodness and mercy are concerned in the administration of human affairs. Happy and prosperous men looked on when calamity befell others, and, noting the extremity of their pain, said to one another, "Surely, now he will curse God and die;" and when, instead of cursing and despair, some new song of confidence burst from the sufferer's lips, the wonder grew as to the mystery of the divine goodness. By evidence, men could never prove that the Power was wise or that it was good. But, by evidence also, men were never able to convince themselves that there was no God, or that he was not good, nor to change the main course of human thought away from the recognition of good-will in the administration of the central Power of the universe.

Summary. An impression has been made upon the sensitive nature of man that gratitude and love are due to the Power by which we live. The impression often made has been continually repeated in striking forms, and has become hereditary and instinctive.

The principal emotions excited are hope and fear, wonder, curiosity, awe, reverence, obligation, loyalty, gratitude, and love.

The characteristic is love.

Religion, then, is a certain attitude of man in the presence of the supreme Power with which he has to do. It is the inevitable result of the impression made upon his sensitive nature by his attempt to establish relations with the universe in which he finds himself. The great facts make upon him the impression that power, mystery, wisdom, justice, and love are in immediate and constant contact with his life. The characteristic religious sentiments thereby excited are dependence, wonder, reverence, loyalty, and love. These combined are religion of a form

high or low, as one element or another predominates, and as they originate in base or noble natures, directed to base or noble ends. In their high and natural expression, they lift the whole nature to higher levels of trust, happiness, and courage. They prepare man for action. They give him a proper setting for the virtues. If religious men are not good (which is entirely possible and very common), because their development has been partial and one-sided in their human relations, still, if the religious impression be strong, if they have been greatly convinced that the power of which they are a part, be it divine or devilish (two words from the same root), is carrying out purposes in which they are necessarily implicated, that it has designs of which they are or may be the executors, they become exceedingly more influential than the irreligious in shaping the fortunes of society. The religious man is a force, and cannot be eliminated from the problem of modern development. For no sooner is one religion suppressed than nature produces another.

If religion take on a high form, its fruits are joy, peace, aspiration, a noble ambition, an elastic courage, a great expectation. If it take a low form, the emotions will still have their way, but in remorse and shame, in ignoble fears, in ignoble and selfish worship of the Power upon which even the evil-minded, if intelligent, must consciously depend for life and for such happiness as is possible to them. Herbert Spencer's latest book, while affirming agnosticism with great vigor, closes with these words concerning the man of science: "Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty that he is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed." With that certainty ever before him, the coming man, be he scientific or otherwise, will sometimes be powerfully moved by the necessity of

ordering his life in accordance with the laws of that energy, and will in time develop anew, if he ever loses all existing forms of religion, something which will powerfully move his emotions and his imagination, and influence his conduct; and that will still be religion. Religion, as thus conceived, is the outcome of knowledge based on personal experience. Now, to this body of organized knowledge, what relation have the evidences, Christian, scientific, ethical, — what right relation?

1. Christian Evidences. Their nature and validity it is not necessary to discuss at length, because there is now little question among well-instructed people as to the independence of the religious sentiment, and the validity of the testimony offered by the religious consciousness of the race, before, outside of, and independent of Christianity. The evidences, in so far as they are valid, confirm the religious impression, — they do not supplant it. On this point there is little controversy; and it is only necessary to say that, whatever course our thought may take, we are brought at last to one example, — Jesus and his teaching. Of this, we note the fact that, in going up the scale of experiences, we find at the bottom every one in the hands of power, not every one at the top in conscious relations with goodness; and that, as men rise to successive heights of spiritual experience, they find that Jesus has been there before them. Whether men regard religion as a good or an evil thing in human society, there is substantial unanimity of opinion on this point. There is also increasing accord of belief in the statement that truth must furnish its own credentials. Truth and goodness unite in the words and life of Jesus, not made true and good by his word, but chosen and honored by him because they were self-evident and to him authoritative. Religion is not based on Christianity, but Christianity is based on religion.

2. Scientific Evidences. What is a scientific basis of religion? It has no scientific basis. It never had one, and it never can have. Facts have no scientific basis. Theories, hypotheses, intellectual systems, may or may not have a scientific basis. But religion is neither a theory, an hypothesis, nor an intellectual system. It is an experience. Science may furnish and multiply the occasions which excite religious emotion, — a service which it may often render to æsthetics or ethics. But religion, æsthetics, and ethics do not, therefore, become scientific, unless one should say that all truth, being agreeable to the principles of science, is therefore scientific. But, strictly speaking, science does not begin with experience nor with conscious knowledge, but with reflection, comparison, and classification. Truth is not a synonym of science.

Science is simply a co-ordination of facts according to their laws and relations. The facts have no scientific basis: the statement concerning the fact may. The attraction of gravitation and the motions of the heavenly bodies have no scientific basis. Kepler's laws have. Religion, being a fact of experience or nothing, can have no scientific basis; but theology, which is an attempt to co-ordinate and account for the facts of religious experience, may have one.

In the world of thought, just now a curious phenomenon is to be noted. There has been a vehement protest made against the ancient method of using the Christian evidences, on the ground that truth bore its own credentials, and could not be proved by evidence, however well attested. It must be a matter not of hearsay, but of experience. But now, in the name of science, many who most earnestly deprecated the old method, as tending to formalism and dogmatism, are engaged in the attempt to introduce scientific evidences, to be used in the same way as the basis of religious faith, with the prospect of bringing about results

similar to those which they so much deplore. If the present attempt should be successful, the next generation would certainly cry out against the new yoke; for, in the name of science, we are in danger of setting up a new creed, a new bigotry, a new intolerance. Does not that which they mean who talk about the "scientific basis" of religion relate to another question, namely, Can the facts of religious experience be classified, verified, assigned to their proper causes, and reduced to a system? That question has nothing to do with the reality of the experiences in question; and they who raise it ought to know that what they are invoking is that which they deplore as a bugbear of the past, namely, systematic theology.

Now, on any subject, one may have great knowledge and not be scientific. That is, he may have had wide experience of many things, which he cannot properly describe and classify. A Nantucket shipmaster in the old time might easily have had knowledge enough to furnish a dozen young scientists with all the facts they could manipulate. One may be very scientific and have little knowledge. He may have proper ideas of classification, but have as yet few facts to set in order. His classification waits to be filled out, and will greatly assist in his researches.

This distinction may easily explain a puzzle, which has given not a little trouble to those who have tried to give up all religion which was not scientific. They cannot understand why some, at least, of the greatest examples of religious insight of a kind not yet surpassed, nor soon likely to be, are to be found in rude ages, while as yet science was without form, and void. "If religion," they have anxiously asked, "is to be in the future dependent upon science, how does it happen that, with the spread of science, the moderns do not easily surpass the ancients in religious experience, or at least show the beginnings of a great advance in that direction?"

Isaiah and the prophets, how did they know? Whence the knowledge of that man who, in the Book of Job, exhibits such accurate acquaintance with the secrets of universal human experience? Why are not these great imaginations of the ancient time dispelled instead of being made more real to us by the advance of knowledge? Why should not some disciple of Herbert Spencer easily surpass the Twenty-Third Psalm, if increase of science is to give us increase of religion, — religion being on a scientific basis? Simply because experience always precedes science. First come the great discoveries, then the great systems. There were men, in times which favored such moods, who surrendered themselves to great impressions. They were not scientific: they did not need to be. They were capable of experiences which smaller men might formulate and classify. Such a man as Isaiah might in an hour have experiences which it would puzzle an ordinary man, during his lifetime, to describe and classify. Probably he would have been entirely unable to describe them himself. Religion, which precedes theology and is not to be confounded with it, has no scientific basis, and does not owe its origin or certainties to the scientific methods which may be employed in the investigation of it. New and higher forms of religious experience may follow such scientific researches, and are to be hoped for and expected. Whether theology has such a basis or not depends upon other considerations not here to be discussed.

3. Ethical Basis. Has religion an ethical basis? No: it has no ethical basis, and in the nature of things can have none. Religion does not begin in ethics. It did not grow out of ethics. It was before ethics in origin, and has, during a great part of human history, wrought in life independently of, and, not infrequently, in distinct opposition to, the ethical sentiment. Let all sense of ethical

obligation be destroyed or reduced again to the level of the prehistoric standard, and still religion, although of a baleful sort, and threatening dire evils to mankind, would none the less be a power in human life not to be disregarded. To say that neither ethics nor religion can possibly attain to its best without the other is not to offer proof that they are in any sense identical, or can be based the one upon the other. Æsthetic feeling cannot attain to its best when divorced from morals. But they are not therefore identical. Ruskin says that an artist who is a bad man will die young or paint bad pictures when he is old. But that is not to say that art is based on morals.

The desire to identify ethics and religion is always the sign of a magnanimous intent. It means that one is so enamoured with goodness that nothing which is not good can be accepted and honored by him. During a great part of its history, the Church, in all its forms as an organized institution, has disparaged ethics, and done less than due honor to those who were more just than devout. They who see the defect of the Church reverse the process, and, in their generous ardor for fair play and due honor to every part of human nature, put ethics in the place of honor before occupied by religion. So doing, they repeat in reversed order the enormous mistake of the Church, and prepare the way for another revolution in the interest of the exact truth, and equal honors to all parts of the spiritual nature of man.

That a bad man cannot have a good religion, and that religion cannot come to its best when divorced from ethics, are statements so true and commonplace that they need no proof. But this is the plain English of the ethical basis. The heart sends its currents through both veins and arteries, and each depends upon the other. But veins and arteries are not therefore identical in origin, function, location, or structure. Remove one or the other, and the heart

will shed its blood with equal impartiality; and the ebbing life will show that both are essential parts of the organs of life.

Dogmatism has in the past been associated with religion; and, when the attempt is made to rehabilitate ethics, the danger is that one may confound religion with dogma, and so with magnanimous intent make a costly blunder. Dogma results from the attempt to make a final definition. But the definition is not the fact, and may be quite inadequate to represent it. Ethical experience is one thing, the description of it quite another; and dogmatism is quite as likely, — just now, for example, in the strife between transcendental and utilitarian ethics, rather more likely, — to attach itself to ethics as to religion. When we put religion on an ethical basis, the contention is not between ethics and dogma. Intend what we may, what we do is to set religion and ethics over against each other in an unnatural antagonism. Out of such a strife, evil and not good must come, and evil of the same kind which they wrought who insisted that ethics must be subsidiary to religion and subservient to it. Neither is subject to the other. Neither is the basis of the other. Both are elements of glorious beauty in that growing human nature which is large enough to hold them both in its ample bosom.

4. Religious Experience. The phrase is badly damaged, and yet is indispensable, because it has to do with a fact in the life of every man. Good or bad, every one must take some, if not all, of the five steps already described. (1) Even the bad man comes to a sense of dependence upon Power, which he cannot escape nor resist. That consciousness will go with him, the source of his noblest hopes and most degrading fears. He cannot do other than wonder at times whether the Power is working

with him or against him. When he believes that it is on his side, he rejoices, even in his evil, if that be in his heart. But, as he goes on into closer relations with the Power, upon which he makes his demands and from which he expects reinforcement, he becomes aware (2) of mystery. There is something more than he thought in the relation. If he be thoughtful, the great occasions of his own life will excite in him a certain awe and wonder, — his marriage, the birth of his children, their growth, their death, and the great joys and sorrows which these experiences bring. These will excite in him wonder as to the meaning of it all. (3) If he have the usual experiences of his kind, the suggestion of wisdom, or at least of intelligence in some way correspondent to his own, but greater, will break upon him. Then, if he be taking an upward course, and have the desire to give the best within himself a chance, there will come upon him a great longing to know what the Wisdom means by what it does, what it wishes and intends. Consciously or not, he prays: "Oh that I knew what the Wisdom asks of me, that I might do it! Oh that I might be guided, that I might know its ways!" Then (4), coming to the thought of the justice, the law, the eternal purity, and contrasting with them what he finds within himself, the soul within him shrinks for shame. As the revelation of the eternal Perfectness comes to him, he sees his folly, his weakness, and his sin; and he cries, "Woe is me; for I am a man of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the Lord of glory." Then his heart melts within him in contrition and tenderness; and another vision breaks upon him, and he hears (5) the proclamation which came to the seer in the wilderness: "The Lord is a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth;" and then, in the presence of the eternal goodness he is comforted.

It is possible for a man not ethically sound and good to

pass through all these experiences, but in a reversed order, resembling the other like a shadow cast in troubled water. The conviction comes upon him only to cause him terror, fearful wonder, shame, guilt, and remorse. It is his experience of religion, nevertheless.

Of all these things there is and can be no proof. They are the impressions made upon many successive generations of individuals, impressions which may be repeated indefinitely, and which yet cannot have scientific verification. For no experience can be like another. We look upon a person and love him, we cannot tell why. Our testimony would be accepted in no court of law, because we have nothing to offer but the memory of an impression; and yet, for such an impression, men have often risked their lives. No knowledge that we have is so sure except mathematical.

5. Science and Ethics. What, then, can they do? Everything which two of the most important parts of human nature can do for another part to keep it in time and tune with all the rest. Science opens the eyes, stimulates the imagination, reveals the mighty universe of fact with which the soul has to deal as it passes beyond the bounds of its own experience in its quest for knowledge of the eternal. Science removes difficulties and multiplies opportunities. It sets before the mind the immensities of time and space, the wondrous things out of the eternal law, the marvel and mystery of all being, even that which is simply the stuff which being uses. And, so doing, it gives the imagination of man the room which it requires for its flight, and vastly increases the number of the objects which make upon the sensitive nature impressions of sublimity and power.

Ethics: Who shall dare to disparage or slight that mystic power in man which, growing through all the ages

from the rudest beginnings, commands continually the growing life of man, and shapes it to finest issues? Springing, as it does, out of the necessary relations of man to man, it reveals itself as the only condition on which society can exist, the only way in which an individual can attain to his best. It clears the mind of ignoble ambitions. It purifies the heart, and so prepares the nature for freedom and joy and peace. The glad upspringing of the soul into the activity of being becomes its natural motion. Religion becomes a nobler thing, when it is the relation of a good man to the powers above. It is no longer the mere dependence of weakness upon Power, of ignorance seeking the infinite Wisdom. It becomes a revelation of moral issues, which demand of every creature that he shall be no longer a spectator of, but a participant in, the great processes by and through which the Power is working out the destiny of man, and of what besides one can only dimly see, while he believes it to be sublime beyond his power of conception.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of..... dollars.

[No. 63]

RELIGIOUS HABITS.

BY

REV. THOMAS R. SLICER.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

RELIGIOUS HABITS.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." — ISAIAH xl. 31.

THE question of Delilah to Samson — "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth?" — was prompted by a display of power uncommon and surprising. The answer of the strong man told the story of a Nazarite's covenant with his God; the unshorn hair, the face unshaven, the natural, unembarrassed life, were the outward signs of a vow that had been taken by the parents and assumed by their child to belong without reserve to God, as they conceived God. The luxurious life of the time had not touched Samson, the dissipations of his people had not weakened him; his life had been natural and his purpose consistent, — to this he attributed his strength. He was a "tempered" man; he was not easily broken nor the edge of his power dulled. The suggestive story goes on to say that when he laid his head in the lap of the tempter and fell asleep, his locks were shorn, and soon the prison doors closed upon a blind and weak man who was to be shut up to menial work.

What moral lurks in this legend of the heroic age of Israel's judges? Is it not that he who consistently and persistently holds himself to a worthy purpose holds the secret of strength? Is it not that when a man thinks he can intermit his vigilance he casts away the guarantee of his liberty, and that should he complain of such incessant watchfulness against surprise, and protest he is weary, he

will probably be overtaken by harder tasks under baser conditions?

The Hebrew story contains the declaration that devotion is demanded in order to safety and power. This is a law of Nature, which insists upon an uninterrupted order. Pressure is only another name for Nature's effort to maintain its equilibrium. That history does not illustrate for the most part obedience to Nature's demand only shows our disobedience, and does not contradict the law. We are so disobedient that we must learn the laws of health, social, political, and personal, by the evidences of disease, and at great cost. Therefore is it that national well-being is reached by revolutions accomplished or just averted; social science learns much from social misadventure and disaster; and even our personal wisdom is often the result of determining "we will not be caught so again." These are some of the ways Nature takes of avenging her broken laws upon "the children of disobedience."

But evolution, not revolution, is the natural method. The processions of events are by nature regular, orderly, and long prepared. We admit this to be true when we see a coral reef; but it is just as true of an earthquake. We admit it as true when a mature life reaches the close of its days and finds death the natural inlet to a larger life; but it is just as true of suicide and murder, that cause and effect have been logically related. We admit readily this orderly procession and close connection in such moral events as the Lutheran Reformation, — we say of such events, they illustrate the philosophy of history; but if we would inquire into the matter faithfully, the interdependence of cause and effect would appear in the conversion of Saul and in the outbreak of the Salvation Army. Because results are different we need not suppose that Nature has repudiated her responsibility; the revenges of Nature are as certain as her benedictions.

These are truisms so trite that we agree to repudiate both the superstition which speaks of "the wrath of God" and the ignorance which ascribes anything to accident. And yet there is a "wrath of God" in which God has no immediate presence, and there is also a "philosophy of accidents."

Let us now consider illustrations of the intimate relation of cause and effect, of logical sequence in undeviating order in the sphere of personal religion.

What is personal religion? This is one of the current phrases in the vocabulary of cant which would never have been admitted to that vocabulary if it had not stood for a reality.

Religion is in the world, and there are in the world religions. But the sum of all religions is not religion; nor does the study of religions make a man religious. So, then, between religion and religions there must be a well-defined distinction. If in the study of religions we find certain principles which have become to those moved by them a philosophy of life giving manifestly good results in conduct, we will soon find the religious man. He is the individual in whom this philosophy of life is seen as power over sin to subdue it, as power over sorrow to crown it with peace, as power over others for their good, and as such a due reverence for the holiest as the highest that the life of the worshipper "is changed into the same image." When such a field of personal activity has been discovered, the field of personal religion has been reached, and the person reaching it has passed from irreligion to religion. He has a working-capital which is not borrowed nor stolen; it is his own. He has a conception of the meaning and use of life. He has become a willing "laborer together with God."

When such a religious person has been found it may be difficult to know what name to assign him among the many

names which are given to the sons of God, but it will not be difficult to discover the source of his strength as a worker in the kingdom of God. We shall find that this religious man is strong in proportion to his recognition of the laws which regulate consistent growth. He has made, after his own fashion, the discovery that the Hebrew prophet made who said, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "Waiting upon the Lord" is the Hebrew's way of expressing the uninterrupted devotion of an earnest soul to the highest that it knows. Emerson meant the same thing when he wrote to Carlyle: "Account me a drop in the ocean seeking another drop. Or, Godward, striving to keep so true a sphericity as to receive the due ray from every point of the concave heavens!" Kant meant the same reverence for the Eternal Order when he said: "Act as though the principle by which you act were by your will to be made a universal law of Nature." John Stuart Mill, his moral nature swept by grief over the death of his brother, said: "There is one plain rule of life eternally binding, and independent of all variations in creeds and interpretations of creeds, embracing equally the greatest moralities and the smallest; it is this: try thyself unweariedly till thou findest the highest thing thou art capable of doing, faculties and outward circumstances being both duly considered, and then — DO IT." Did not Paul pay tribute to the same power there is in persistent endeavor? He said: "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on." Said Jesus: "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day."

These are a few of the "cloud of witnesses" which might be called to testify, each "in the language in which he was born," to the truth of Isaiah's declaration, — "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

And what better can be promised than the renewal of our strength? Is not this the keenest pang in our review of the past,— that strength failed just when it was needed? Is not this the fear that haunts us, — that we will not be equal to the duty or danger we see before us? And would we so often make ignominious compromise if we could be sure of ourselves? It is a good promise this: "They shall renew their strength." They will not be seized by a sudden impulse toward the religious life for which they wait. It is not *waiting for* the Lord, but *waiting upon* the Lord, which will be the antecedent of this resultant strength. "They shall renew their strength; they shall mount up upon wings as eagles," — flying not as doves to be at rest, but as eagles that seek the sun and the upper air. "They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."

This is the blessed consummation: the process of its accomplishment is logical and natural: the expenditure of labor has its equivalent in the strength which labor brings. It is a beautiful compensation in our nature in all its departments, that while we are putting our strength into our work, our work is putting strength into us. It needed no prayer, — "Establish Thou the work of our hands upon us." It will be *upon us* and *in us;* "we shall *receive the things done* in the body."

Thus do we come to the central thought in this "waiting upon the Lord." It is persistent work in a given line, work which has become the habit of our nature, — a second nature; *the habit* of the nature, that is, that with which mere nature clothes itself, — its habit. In most things we admit the value of repeated acts, — repeated until they become dispositions; duties done again and again until they become first tendencies, then tempers in us. Thus is the raw material of life wrought into character. We recognize the good sense of the distinction that in the assimilation

of knowledge there is to be "milk for babes" and "strong meat for those of full age;" that thus "the senses are exercised to discern good and evil" provision. But we are somewhat slow to admit that all good and all evil are to be discerned by the same process: that the exercised soul, the trained soul, is the discerning soul. It comes to pass, therefore, that though we allow the value of habits in every other sphere of human life, we relegate religion to *impulse*, and demand that it must be not so much *habitual* as *spontaneous*. We are very earnest for "naturalness," "spontaneity," and "freedom" in religion. This is just what ought to be, but with an understanding of what these words mean. Let us examine them. "Naturalness," — that is natural which is *constant*, not that which is occasional. The artificial is a substitute for the natural, the imitation takes the place of the genuine, only because Nature is constant to the pattern, repeating it often enough for us to see what it is like, and so enabling us to make what is like it. Naturalness is only another name for fidelity to a model, constancy in a plan.

Now, what is "spontaneity," of which we hear so much? We are prone to forget that word which lies at its root, — *sponte* (by the will). Is not this also at the root of all education? Is not the will the element most difficult to train, and can there be a greater disaster than for one to have a disobedient will, — a will always in rebellion? For not the assertion of the will, but its education, is strength. It must be an obedient subject of the laws before it is fit to be a judge of the laws. And what of "freedom" in religion? Surely this must be! But who are free? Certainly not the lawless. "They are the slaves of their own liberty." Here, also, freedom is in the exact ratio of obedience, and obedience is habitual docility and unimpeachable fidelity. Of the highest human — the freest soul that ever looked up to God it was said: "Though he

was a Son, yet *learned he obedience* by the things which he suffered."

So, then, "naturalness in religion" is a tribute paid to the constant and habitual. "Spontaneity in religion" is proof of a will so educated that it acts quickly and surely. And freedom in religion has kept the law, and there is no more consciousness of law because there is no violation of it. So all comes back to the training of a human soul by habits of religion. They do not harass nor disturb, because they are not resisted. Jesus said of the yoke he wore, and into which he invites us to put ourselves with him, "*My yoke is easy*, and my burden is light." Our strength well adjusted to our task, we are no longer galled by an unequal pressure nor crushed by a sudden burden.

Even when we deny the need of habitual observance of religious duties we still strongly urge the need of a religious temper. And yet this is impossible without the training of our inner life. The flowers in a conservatory are a vision of beauty, but the successful cultivation of them is a series of very arduous and prosaic details. Also, when we say we no longer need these routine duties of religion, we yet recommend them for our children. "They are yet unformed," we sometimes say. But childhood is not a question of size and age simply. The mature are no longer children; but some people are never ripe. They never grow up. They are always returning to immature views of life, — to be amused or to be corrected. All restlessness under restraint is childish. One must be law-abiding before he can be relieved of "tutors and governors." "If thou wilt *enter into life*, keep the commandments." Keeping these makes the difference between a beginner, a child, and one well on in life.

If it be admitted that the children need to form habits of religion, — need "to wait upon the Lord that they

may renew their strength,"—then if there are those who do not have this need themselves, they will often submit to routine observance lest they "cause one of these little ones to stumble." But this must be done with grace and heartiness which shall cause it to appear as a privilege embraced by the strong, not as a duty done grudgingly for the weak. This was a part of that "grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ,"—to take the place of "the law that was given by Moses."

The best substitute for what we call an outgrown exercise of religious observance will be found to be a higher exercise with a nobler observance; each advanced student holds in his possession the processes of learning *by which* he advanced.

To particularize: Let us consider the public services of the church. We can very well remember some, both men and women, to whom these public services seemed unnecessary. These saints had come, through many years of devoutest life, to have no need of the help which others must find in the sacred associations of the sanctuary,—the kindling of imagination by music and the sense of the communion of saints, the interpretation also of their deep-felt needs by prayer. These "of full age" had possibly a sense of nearness to the Holiest of all, deeper than the man who led the worship, and no music of the church could be so sweet as the unvoiced harmonies within their spirits. Such do not need the public services of religion. They have grown beyond this need; but *how* have they *grown* beyond the need? Surely *through constant use of just such means.* They do not need support,—these souls erect and strong; but they no more think of repudiating the value of such supports to those who need them, than a master of English speech denies the necessity for a training in grammatical accuracy, of which now he is wholly unmindful in detail. These strong, free children of

God need elementary training no longer; but usually they take their place in associations dear to them from long use, and become the teachers by example of the less mature. Such souls do not often put off the habits of religious observance; they are so free that these hamper them not in the using of them. Of that freest soul it is said: "He went into the synagogue, *as his custom* was, on the Sabbath-day."

But there are some not mature nor free who say they take nothing with them from the services, so they no longer attend. It is true of some of these that the failure to attend is not made more manifest by bodily absence. They did not *attend* — they failed of attention — in these services; their thoughts were in the world while their bodies were in the church. It is most true they took nothing away; they brought nothing to exchange in this mart where aspiration must precede inspiration.

If they mean they added nothing to the sum of their information, so far from that being a matter of regret it is an excellence. It is not the business of the church to compete with the daily press and literature for patronage. It is not the business of the church to furnish entertainment or intellectual excitement. The purpose of the services is to quicken the religious life, to awake the devout affections, to lift to worship, to move Christian men and women to sympathy, to emphasize that wholesome thought, "the household of faith and family of God;" and in carrying away such results as these much depends upon what the worshipper brings to the house of prayer; *he is a prime factor* in the sum of influences there. For these influences the church is maintained; if, then, these wearied men and women drop out of the services altogether, or give only an occasional and indifferent attention to them, allowing small hindrances to detain them, or are incapacitated for a proper attention in them by the exhaustion of freshness of spirit

by the week's work or dissipations, then nothing of good will come to them from such services; but the neglect and superficiality will tell upon their own nature and on their home life. Such persons often wonder why the church does not attract the young. The young cannot think that admirable which their elders treat with contempt. No boast of being beyond the need of such things will obliterate the fact of ignorance of the spiritual life and enfeebled spiritual apprehension. Such as these must return to a maintenance of the habits of religion or else find a substitute for these habits which will produce better results, and which can be safely recommended to their children; for amid all changes, human need and the constitution of the human soul remain unchanged.

Let us consider this matter of habits of religious life in another particular. We have seen some who smile with a tender affection, but a feeling of superior wisdom, when simple elder folk talk about the habit of reading the Bible; for still there are some to whom this book seems like a never-failing spring of refreshment. They study it, not critically, but devoutly.

This is not the new way of using the Scriptures. By some the Scriptures are studied critically, and these have placed all the world of Bible-students in their debt; by some the Scriptures are used devotionally, and by others read simply as a literature of greater or less interest. To none who have given the Scriptures right attention are they any longer a statute-book of ready reference for final appeal. None of these methods corresponds with the elder *habit* of daily reading of the Scriptures, "which they have known from their youth." These elder Christians communed with Psalmist and Prophet; they followed Jesus from point to point of his ministry; they sat in the company of the Apostles and read the Epistles with a

feeling of reality, as did the infant church. Is our way the only way, or is there wisdom in this older habit also? We often see significant lack of this older habit in the newer method; for in those subjects of current debate which so often cross the ground of the Bible and have so much to do with the nature of man, it often appears that the debaters are painfully ignorant of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures in their plain words, unable to quote the words, and hopelessly confused as to the sense. Of course a knowledge of the whole Bible has no vital relation to human well-being or character; but it would seem desirable that Christian men and women should be able to repeat correctly the precepts of Jesus and should know the facts of his life and the motives he assigned for his living. Unless they are thus familiar with so much of the Bible, they ought not to attempt to take part in any conversation on the grounds of Christian faith and practice. Their duty is silence. It is the only compensation ignorance can offer to the world, which is deeply interested in these very subjects so familiar to the elder Christians among us.

But there is a better reason yet for an habitual reading of the Scriptures. Nothing so steadies us as frequent mental contact with those who are sure of the Eternal Verities. There is an assurance of faith in these best parts of the Bible that is contagious; and a quiet comes which, if it is not strength and knowledge, affords a better temper in which to gain knowledge and strength. These are the utterance in terms of experience of the sublimest thoughts that can visit us from the unseen. Familiarity with these seems to be a necessary element in religious education. This or some sufficient substitute must be used; for the training of the human soul will go on by some method accepted by our will or forced on us unaware. The easiest and shortest road by which the mind of the young is ruined

debased, is that so often taken: they are turned loose upon business occupations or superficial literature by day, and upon the frivolities of social life by night; thus no hour is saved for quiet thought, contact with noble minds, and the pondering of those results of divine communion which have produced the Holy Scriptures of all the past. It is only in these quiet times that the spirit grows in that power which will make all our other life a blessing and a joy. Some habit of religious reading we ought to have: it is necessary; it soon becomes delightful. The prophet need not be Hebrew, but he must be a prophet; the psalmist need not sing in Palestine or Chaldea, but he must have a heavenly harmony in his song.

There remains one other particular in which habits of the religious life assume the gravest importance. It is the value which attaches to the habits of devotion, — the need of prayer as a habit of the soul. It is frequently said that our whole life ought to be a prayer; that prayer ought to be offered when we are moved to pray; that formalism is of all things to be avoided. This is all true; but it does not often happen that these true things are said by the people who have the best means of knowing how true they are. Those whose spirits pray continually, who unconsciously live in an atmosphere spiritual and vital, to whom praying is natural as breathing (it is aspiration and inspiration), — these are not the people who warn us against habits of prayer, and they are the only people whose word is worth much attention on this subject. They have "continued in prayer and watched in the same, with thanksgiving." They have verified the statement that there is no sound life without prayer; that prayer is one of the laws of the higher life.

On the other hand, those who neglect these deep communings are still driven often to prayer by dire extremity. When disaster threatens them, when sickness lays hold on

their beloved, when the pressure of life seems more than they can bear alone, then they try to pray; they

> "stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what [they] feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope."

But how often is it true that all this is not in the best sense prayer! It takes on the form of supplication, petition, expostulation; our agony besieges God; and behind all this lies the barren waste of an uneducated will and a stubborn selfishness. Thus rebels plead for mercy; thus does not a child of God commune with its Father, seeking to know and to do His will. There can be no "nearness of access with confidence" unless our feet have often walked that road.

It ought to be no wonder that so we plead for religious habits as a means to spiritual culture; this is "the way of the Spirit." There is no royal road to anything: the king going to his coronal must go by the same road his subjects travel; therefore is it said of Jesus, "though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

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[No. 64]

THE MAKING OF A SOUL.

BY

REV. GEORGE A. THAYER.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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THE MAKING OF A SOUL.

At the first wisdom will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul. — ECCLESIASTICUS iv. 17.

THUS the wise man described the process of making a soul. We have heard much, in religious teaching, of saving souls; but a far more important thought is that life is the field in which souls are practically being created, or developed out of the germs of a soul which every human being has at birth.

Of the myriads of people who have been born since the earth began to bear men-kind (some thousand or two centuries ago, it may be), how many have become souls, — creatures governed by reason, by tender love, by high moral purpose? How many have differed essentially in modes of living, in their observation of the world they lived in, in the regulation of their passions towards other beings, from dogs, jackals, or wolves? Is it then easy, as in the opinion of the unthinking, to tell what a soul is? That is, does the term mean simply a human life? And when we speak of the immortality of the soul, do we mean that if one has human shape he is sure to live the eternity of God? If he be a little short of human, — an intelligent monkey, a conscientious dog, a faithful, hard-working horse, — is he *not* a soul? If he be a savage, an idiot, a monster of immorality whose whole career has been a terror and a bane to the community which happened to be

infested with him, is he nevertheless an immortal soul? Or shall we enlarge the scope of immortality, and for the sake of saving some of our human kind, who surely have been less intelligent, useful, and agreeable to have about us than some of the brute kind, say, Whatever lives with instinctive activity has a soul and a prospect of immortality?

Without attempting now to grapple with so hard a matter as the definition of the line between beings likely to live after what we call death, and those for whom death ends all, I think we may agree that the sort of human beings who clearly ought to be immortal, in so far as they possess the graces of mind and character which would do enduring service for the universe wherever they might go, are, for the most part, those who have been shaped by life's experiences. The majority of persons whom, with due reverence for the word, we may call souls, — thoughtful, helpful, self-controlled, of generous aim, — are not *born* but *made* by the life in which they dwell, — by the interaction, the play upon each other of that which is within the man and that which is outside of him. And life, as you and I know it, is not altogether a summer's holiday, in which we have only to enjoy: it is also stern, hard, capricious, full of terrors and pains, baffling and disappointing us ofttimes up to our dying hour. So it must be that if the world has God in it, the so-called hard and bad things are indispensable to making us moral and spiritual beings; that is, it is the combating just these disagreeable things which imparts to souls some of their finest fibre and quality.

This doctrine is in the face of two others very commonly held. The impression given by a large class of religious teachers is that men are like passengers through the world, needing one or two assurances, which only certain churches can impart, that they are upon the road to the right destination, but not deriving any advantage to faith

and morals from the world through which they pass. In this view, experience, trial, and discipline, as derived from contact with men and nature, are rather a hurt than a help to virtue and piety. The man of God, the divine soul, is an alien in a hostile land so long as he dwells in the body. He may draw a free, glad breath when he gets safely through, as one does who has passed through a wilderness beset with wild beasts.

Then there are people whose opinion is that the world is a place of luck and chance. It is just as likely to degrade and destroy the finer manhood as to advance it. Evils are brute forces, to be avoided if possible, to be made the best of if they must be met; but never having any hidden purpose of blessing through their control and use by a higher law. But this opinion — apt to be entertained by soured, thoughtless, or superficial people — does not accord with the best philosophy of science any more than it satisfies the noblest natures of men. *Law*, not luck or accident, is the word which the observing men of science use in speaking of the workings of every part of the world; and law means the different parts working into one another to beget definite ends.

How strange it would be, if this mighty sum of things mid which we dwell were really less intelligent and moral than if it were the handiwork of a large-minded man! For intelligent man constructs machinery to do something creditable; and is there less wise intention in the construction of the world? If one looking at the masses of clouds drifting overhead in an autumn day should say, These have no meaning, no part in the economy of Nature, no relation to the purification or redistribution of the atmosphere, he would talk as people used to do before the science of meteorology discovered that clouds and weather never merely *happen*, but are incidents in a great body of world-constructing forces. If one should say of an earthquake

or a tornado, This is only a chance agitation of matter, connected with nothing, incapable of offering any clew to the future of the world or any glimpse into its past, he would be looked upon as an ignoramus by sensible observers of Nature. So it is the case with regard to the various happenings round about your and my souls which we call pleasures or sorrows, perils or helps: a little careful observation of them as they work with living men and women will show that they are soul material, knitting themselves into the fabric of our characters, not to destroy or damage only, — although they sometimes do such mischief to incapable souls, — but also to broaden, deepen, enrich, and put into varied fine and beautiful shapes. We might be angels or some other sorts of spiritual beings in a world different from this in which we dwell, but in order to be souls we must be at school in just this life.

And what the Hebrew sage said of the formation of a soul fit to be trusted, that it must go by crooked ways, not straight forward to its end, has its frequent illustration in the way most of the finer types of people are made. Most of us have had occasion to seek some object in the darkness, it may be in a dark cellar or in the woods in the night. We generally pursue a process of feeling our way, — of touching things first upon one side and then the other, so that our track is a crooked one. All thoughtful life is such a process of feeling the way. We must touch this and that and the other sort of experience; we must aim towards many points where we think what we need is to be found, until in due season we attain it or give up the search. Only we are not impelled by our will alone, but circumstances and a sort of necessity drive us on. We must act, if we are alive; we must choose; we must make experiments; and we must many times do the unwise, the wrong, and pain-begetting thing.

When the baby starts upon the unfamiliar journey of

life he bumps his head, pinches his fingers, gets scratched by the kitten and bitten by the dog, — all disagreeable circumstances, — and out of them all acquires intelligence and morals, they being most useful and indispensable lessons to these ends; for he must and ought for his soul's good to learn to live on right terms with dogs and cats and stone pavements and doors that are liable to shut. When a man seeks to invent a labor-saving machine, a great part of the assured value of his invention depends upon his having found out, as he worked slowly with his original idea, what cannot be done with his materials, how much strain iron and wood will and will *not* bear, how unsatisfactory, incomplete, and liable to immediate breakage his machine would be if he made it as he first thought. The sewing-machine, steam-engine, telephone, and all the rest of the wonder-working mechanisms are the result of constant disappointments and bafflings encountered by their originators. And the disappointments were worth while, because they widened the mind of the inventor to obtain a more perfect result.

The object of your and my living is that we may turn out the most many-sided and complete souls attainable by our constitution. But we must know men, know the world, know the limitations of our own powers by means of various contacts and rebuffs, as indispensable preliminaries to completing those souls. I don't know how hardy my frame is until I have met sharp cold and intense heat, been wet and hungry and tired with effort. Then I begin to suspect what I can safely undertake and what I had best avoid in dealing with my body. I do not know whether I have a weak will or a strong will, a quick mind or a slow mind, an appetite that can control me or a central power which can dominate all my appetites, until I have been tried by something which resists and opposes me. The boy who has been shown how to work out all his problems in

arithmetic and algebra, and had his compositions written for him, has no knowledge of these subjects which will serve him in active life. Unless he would make a miserable failure he needs to wrestle, to agonize, and to fail many times; then he does his work, and he knows how to do other and superior work.

When Mr. Gladstone began the study of the government of Ireland years ago, he overestimated the efficacy of his political ideas and theories in pacifying that unhappy people. The very stubborn resistance with which he has had to contend from all quarters has not only steadily matured his mind in those types of statesmanship which we call Christian, as distinct from those which omit the elements of faith in right and of fair play toward the socially weak, but he has educated the entire people of Great Britain into more humane and rational conceptions of the proper functions of government. And by and by, not far hence, Ireland, having won its rights, will perhaps be a better state than if the end could have come a century ago; certainly Mr. Gladstone will be a larger man for not having had a smooth, undisturbed path of statesmanship.

The finest types of souls are composed of varied qualities which balance and complement one another: they must be brave and tender; they must be confident and modest; they can be stern and inexorable toward wrong, yet pitiful toward the weak. But such contrasting states of mind seldom or never exist in a person until he can say, "There is not a range of human joy or misery which I have not touched in the course of my lifetime; touched, not because I sought or desired it, but because it came to me inevitably as, driven by will and circumstance, I groped my way through the world."

How many a father whose early life was one of hardship thinks, "I will spare my son the wretchedness I had

to bear in those old days of poverty. He shall have no hard fighting with circumstances, no going hungry nor wearing shabby clothes, no wrestling at odd hours and with poor books to get something called an education; he shall begin where I left off, and from there he ought to go on to a far more useful and happy manhood than his father ever possessed." Yet the outcome of this plan is that the son is a failure so far as the attainment of personal honor or weight of influence is concerned. If anybody pays any attention to him it is for his father's sake, and not for his own individual worth.

The crooked ways of life do not indeed make men perfect; few of us can undergo rough jostling with the elements without having our tempers spoiled and our minds narrowed in many directions. And yet, for the genuine constructive work of society in church or State, the only valuable men are those who have had steadily to set their wills in battle against luck, fate, human ignorance and wickedness, and, in the rough contest, have been as often defeated in the pursuit of the aims they first thought desirable as they have come off victorious.

Life is a sort of gymnasium. It is not of so much consequence whether a man succeeds in doing this or that nice trick with the dumb-bells, Indian clubs, rings, and bars, as that he attains firmness of muscle and symmetry of frame.

Few people, as they approach the close of life and look back, can say that most of the things which they projected in their youth have been attained; but neither can they feel sure that if they had attained the half of them they would have been as wise, happy, or good as they now are. He who can extract solid satisfaction from life, act well his part among men, and have a pure conscience before God upon five hundred dollars a year, has won far more from life than if he is peevish, disagreeable, and

devoid of sympathy, intelligent interest, and moral scruple, upon five thousand a year. Yet how few do not rate the five thousand dollars as life's success, and the five hundred dollars as life's failure! Daniel Webster, William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, and numberless other strong statesmen died in the half conviction that their careers had been comparative failures, unrecognized of their countrymen, simply because they never reached the Presidency. As if the Presidential office were an invariable badge and reward of statesmanship; and to have the genius to carry a nation through great straits of diplomacy or financial perplexity were less honorable than to live for a season in the White House!

"Wisdom torments man with her discipline," says the wise man farther, "until she can trust his soul." Very likely he had in mind some of the schoolmaster methods of his time, of setting scholars unmanageable lessons and whipping them if they did not master them; and life seems often to do that for all of us. Yet not, any more than in the case of the old-fashioned school-teacher, without a shrewd purpose. Discipline means education; and true education is quite as much in unlearning things as in learning, — in ridding our minds of foolish, impracticable, and short-sighted notions. If the most of us could enter life without the large burden of senseless aims, unwarrantable expectations, and overestimates and misjudgments of our powers which we generally carry, we should be happier and more useful than we now are. In college and in business and professional careers, one of the greatest services done a young man is, as the familiar phrase goes, "taking the conceit out of him," — showing him where he is inferior to others, where he is weak and incapable. It is a hard process, but most wholesome for genuine worth. To teach any of us what we do not know is to stimulate us to know. To point out to us where we

shall probably fail is to force us to concentrate energy where we may succeed. Look at some of the experiences in your lives which as they happened seemed most cruel, and see how often, if you will be candid and honest in your inquiry, you can trace from them some of your best elements of mind and heart. But, of course, the chief source of the strength which comes to us from opposition and temporary misfortune is in our resolute wills and high faith to make much of life, let nature and man baffle us as they may. If the germ of souls be not in us at the outset, all education is wasted upon us.

It is said of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the English orator and dramatist, that having made a mortifying failure in his first attempt at speech-making in Parliament he exclaimed, "It is in me, and it shall come out!" A great soul, a son of God, will always have similar confidence in his power to make for himself an outlet of success in one direction if all other directions are shut up to him. The man who believes in God most sincerely and heartily — which is but another way of saying "the man who is able to discern the great moral law which underlies and controls all events" — will have no doubt that, come to him what may that is trying, mortifying, desperate, there is a noble work and an honorable place for him among souls; for he is not put here simply to deal with difficulties, but difficulties are here for him to show their insignificance and powerlessness when a soul grapples with them. One of the most impressive lessons which this era of material conquest is setting before us all is in showing the height of greatness to which the will and intellect of man can rise when there is some feat to be accomplished in the struggle with matter which hitherto has been thought to be impracticable.

Journey in the tracks of the scientific engineer through the Suez canal, along the precipices of the Colorado moun-

tains where the railroad crowns dizzy heights, over the Brooklyn bridge, through the Hoosac or the St. Gothard tunnel, and, if you can, avoid feeling exultantly that mightier than mountains or seas is the mind of man, which answers their defiance of his weakness by laying them bound at the feet of human utility. So the soul, in high stations or in lowly stations, is at its greatest not when things are easy, but when it is stirred out of sluggishness to meet sorrow, pain, and wrong, and from them to wring the blessing they held in concealment.

And wherever we are faithfully and earnestly trying to do our best with life, keeping heart amid discouragements, looking ever for the bright sky behind the cloud, — we are making souls fit for advancement in the Father's realm of service. Let us be sure there will be no failure to make a soul when we believe that we have a soul in germ, and do our part to unfold it as God shows us what we ought to do.

[No. 65]

IDEAL SUBSTITUTES FOR GOD.

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU, D.D., LL.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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IDEAL SUBSTITUTES FOR GOD.

"THEOLOGY," after ranking for many centuries as the noblest branch of human learning, and even receiving homage "as the Queen of Sciences," has at last fallen upon an age which not only disputes its traditional pre-eminence, but would send it, discrowned and outlawed, into irreversible banishment. In order to judge aright between the old estimate of it and the new, we must look at its supposed contents, and consider what *Theology essentially is*. The word itself, belonging as it does to a well-known group of compounds, indicates its own central conception. As Geology is the methodical knowledge of the earth's crust, — Physiology, of living organisms, — Psychology, of the self-conscious mind, — Ethnology, of the races of mankind, — so is Theology the doctrine or rational apprehension of *God*. He is its object; and those who teach it assume that our faculties can take cognizance of Him, no less than the Cosmologist assumes that he can intelligently construe the variety and unity of the world. The *methods* of seeking Him have indeed changed with the genius of the thinker and the temper of his age. But whether he has proceeded (with Descartes) from the Idea to the infinite Reality, or (with Wolff) from the contingency of the universe to its necessary Source, or (with Paley) from the skill and

beauty of nature to its intellectual Inventor, or (with Kant) from the moral law to its righteous Legislator, or (with Chalmers) from the records of past revelations to the character of the Revealer, — in every instance the light from afar which has sustained the inquirer's zeal has been still the same — the assured *Divine knowledge* in which the toil shall end. This is the inspiration of Theology; and if that living breath departs, it collapses and dies.

By watching the gradual change in the choice and complexion of words, we gain a kind of Nilometer, which shows the shifting levels and gathering floods of thought, and warns us of the season's work. And it is not without significance that, in place of what used to be called the study of *Theology*, we now more often hear of the "Science of *Religions*," i. e. the systematic knowledge of what *men have believed and felt* on things sacred to them. The difference is obvious: it drops us down from a Divine to a Human object, from the yearning of Reason after its transcendent Reality to the history and critique of ethnic mythologies. As an element in the study of man, rich in psychological instruction, there is every ground for welcoming the new expansion recently given to this order of inquiries, and for rendering all honor to the leaders who open the way through them. And the treatment of them in the pure historical spirit, unperverted by theoretic preconceptions or apologetic interests, places them for the first time in their true position: for, as long as ancient and foreign religions had no reporter but the Christian theologian, it was vain to expect for them a sympathy adequate to their interpretation. Still, the importance of these studies is wholly anthropological. They tell the grotesque and pathetic story of our struggling race, — the dreams of its darkness, the guesses of its wonder, the surmises of its sin; but supply no selective rule for saving

the true while pitying the false, and yield no Divine knowledge but what we bring to them. If, in pursuing them, we are already and independently furnished with our theology, they will reflect perhaps some rays of it here and there, and so adorn it with a fresh illustration; but, in themselves, they will merely pass before us strange forms of thought, on which we gaze as from an outside station, and which we treat only as phenomena of the world. They cannot therefore claim the place of the old "Theology."

Whence this change in the aspect and method of religious theory? Why has it parted with its Infinite Object, and taken up instead with men's poor fancies about it? Can the broken lights of primeval superstitions render a truer image of things Divine than immediate intellectual vision? Have we really come to that last resort of superannuated philosophy, an eclectic commonplace-book of favorite beliefs? No doubt the reason is, that our age finds it easier to feel sure of what Religion *is* in man, than of what it *says* of God; and can treat it therefore with tenderness and respect as a subjective phenomenon, but hesitates to follow its daring launch-out on the ocean of real being. Its power as an element of character, as an inspiration in art, as a federator of nations and factor of history, is freely admitted; and no place that it can fairly claim in the genesis of society and the regulation of life is denied to it. But that it knows its own meaning, and that that meaning is true; that what it sees is really there and no phantasm of the mind; that, when its mythical drapery is stripped off, anything substantive remains within; — on all this our generation, dazzled by its discoveries and deserted by its simplicity, feels bewildered and insecure. Yet we are naturally averse to supposing that mere emptiness and illusion can have a dominant influence in the education of mankind: so we try to find some solid little nucleus

secreted at the centre of this brilliant nebula, and to make out that, if *we* could not lodge there now, it has belonged, or is going to belong, to some less erratic and more habitable world; and we insist that, though in itself it cannot pretend to much reality, it may symbolically stand for a good deal, if we do but construe it aright. We readily perceive that the higher forms of Religion assume (inter alia) some rule of human experience, e. g. that *the wicked lay snares for themselves;* or some attitude of the moral consciousness, e. g. the felt *transcendency of duty over performance;* and, seizing upon these included postulates, we say, — "Here is the key: this is the whole story: we have got it now in the plain demotic character; and the hieroglyphics may be rubbed out." What is the result? Much, I think, what we should expect, where the text is disparaged to glorify the interpreter: *its* thought is twisted into a mask, through which *his* eyes look out; and under the guise of ancient sage or prophet, we are confronted by the commonplaces of to-day. Isaiah turns out to be a Martin Tupper.

Of this rationalistic reduction of religion to formulas of experience there are so many examples now-a-days as to indicate a general tendency of our time. Amid their varieties there is one cry in which all their voices concur. It is raised in Holland, but echoed everywhere. "No Metaphysics!" — which means, taken in the foreign sense of the word, "No inquiry into any *Real Being* beyond the phenomena of the world: that is a problem which, whether admitting of solution or not, is indifferent to the spiritual life of humanity: either way, Religion remains a personal and social fact, the contents and significance of which we may examine." In other words, "It is nothing to Religion whether or not there be a God! We may give theology its discharge and let it carry off all its beliefs, without prejudice to human trust and piety; these have ample

support from the laws of our nature and the order amid which we are placed, without seeking any deeper base." It is no wonder that when this one common element of all known religions (for even Buddhism does not answer to the demand, "No Metaphysics!") is removed, very divergent accounts should be given of what the residuary essence really is. In *this* indeed they do agree; — that *Morality*, as next of kin to Religion, must succeed to its inheritance and take its name: only, as they have hitherto existed both together on domains by no means co-extensive and with followers far from identical, it is necessary, if the world is to feel no bereavement, to devise some transformation for morality, — to give it a step of preferment from the temporal to the spiritual peerage, and decorate it with the ostensible symbols of sanctity. The delicate question is, what these shall be. What shall we do to morality in order to turn it into religion? "Touch it with emotion," says Mr. Matthew Arnold, and "fix its eye on the *stream of tendency* as that continuous *not-ourselves* which makes for Righteousness." Mr. Frederick Harrison has no objection to the "emotion;" but prefers, as a Supreme Being, the idea of *collective Humanity* which claims the individual's service and weaves it into its texture for ever. The newest philosophy of Holland deems it enough that the morality shall be *ideal;* not the prosaic will of duty that toils under the burden and heat of the day, but the free flight towards visionary perfection to which midnight contemplation invites. Religion, we are assured, is "Moral Idealism."[1] In this definition the modern tendency finds perhaps its most exact expression; and in the following comments upon the general doctrine, its terms will be prevailingly in my thoughts.

[1] See the discussion on "Godsdienst zonder metaphysica" and on the "Zedelijk Ideaal," in the Theologisch Tijdschrift, 1874-5-6, by Hooykaas, Van Bell, Hugenholtz, Van Hamel, Kuenen, and others.

Let it be admitted at the outset that, *within the limits of Ethics*, — if that were all the ground they claimed, — each of these teachers emphasizes an important truth. That on this scene of our life the course of things "makes for righteousness," — that in "the stream of tendency" the defiling contents gradually subside and leave the waters purer as they flow, — that history, through all its tragedies, contains the promise of Right, — and that a firm trust in this ascending future is an indispensable support for human culture, — is a lesson so momentous, that his appreciation of it may well place Mr. Arnold high among moralists, if only it is not used as his passport of entrance among the prophets. So, again, nothing can be more seasonable than the counterpoise by which Mr. Harrison checks the sophistical egoism of the preceding English philosophers. In proof of their dictum that Pleasure is the ultimate good and the end of all action, they have usually put the case of a solitary person set up in an empty universe, and insisted that if, on arising, he had one pleasant sensation and then passed away, it would have been worth his while to exist; but if the sensation were painful, he had better not have been; so that there is nothing eligible but pleasure. The absurdity of the argument lies in its quiet assumption (under the conception of loneliness) of Individualism, and its reduction of life to mere sentiency. This creature floating in vacancy is, by hypothesis, out of relation to anything but himself: all objects, all companions, are kept out of his way: there is nothing for him to go to or to act upon: he is a self-concentrated focus, surrendered to *passivity*, which has only a sensitive value. On these terms he is not a *man at all;* nor even so much as a sponge in the sea, which at least *does something* with the water around it. The human being is first constituted by precisely the system of relations which are all here omitted: we are what we are by reciprocation: the *individual* is not

the factor, but the *product*, of society; and, to understand our nature, we must reckon with humanity first as a collective and dominant organism, whence he starts forth and differentiates himself. This independence and ascendency of the altruistic relations, with the reverent self-subordination which they enjoin to the abiding and growing life of society, are vindicated with a just enthusiasm by our eloquent Positivist; — with an effect, however, which might have been greater, had not his afflatus carried him over from philosophy to allegory, and mystified his doctrine by expressing it in terms of "the Soul and the Future Life." A still deeper truth it is which has led the extreme school in Holland to resolve religion into "Moral Idealism." They have certainly hit upon the very experience which occupies the border-ground between ethics and faith, and carries the conscience over from rules of life to inward worship. On the one hand, do I not know that, in every alternative offered to my choice, I can both see the higher course and take it, and am solemnly bound to take no other? On the other hand, do I not also know, from the sad lessons of the past, that I shall not persistently do so; and that the will *always* pure and unselfish, just and true, though for ever possible, will be for ever unrealized? This conflict between character and conception is doubtless the cradle of religion: the interval between what we are and what we are guilty for not being, is that which turns our look upwards, to see if there be hope beyond these shadows of reproach, and which makes the heart low and tender to yield to any heavenly promise that may descend. The spirit that has set into this attitude, and, in the daily round of duty, is secretly drawn on by an infinite aspiration, already waits at the gate of heaven.

But it is one thing to be brought to the verge of Religion by sympathy with this or that part of its contents; it is another, to penetrate to its interior essence. And inas-

much as it is the aim of all these interpreters to retain the pieties of human character, while excusing themselves and us from any conscious relations with *the Living God*, I submit that they attempt what is impossible, and that the very life of Religion centres precisely in that which they discard. They feel the elevation and beauty of the best type of spiritual growth, but would fain dispense with its secret aliment and conditions. They look with wonder at the stately stem, as it springs aloft: they love the shade of the foliage: they admire the blossom; — but they cut the root. It is a repetition, at a higher level, of the mistake which the Individualists commit. These try to make a whole of the single person, and from his nature, measured in itself, to deduce a theory of his existence, though that existence is entirely made up of a tissue of relations with his kind and his theatre of being. Humanism corrects this error; yet again renews it, when it shuts up *mankind* within their reciprocal relations, and cuts them off from diviner affinities beyond. Neither ourselves, nor our race, surveyed as an island, can ever be interpreted aright: to understand what we are, and even what we contain, we must venture the embracing seas and integrate our lives with the unmeasured sphere of being.

Do I then restrict the conception of Religion to the sentiments awakened by the presence of *Infinite* Perfection, and say that, short of this point, its characteristic spirit fails? On the contrary, I trace its secret power in all human relations where affection and duty are concerned. Reverence for character above us, at whatever height it may be, is the posture of a *religious* nature; and the aspiration it sustains, the trusts it fosters, the self-sacrifice it renders possible and light, fling into our life its fairest colors and tincture it all with sacredness. Let this devoutness of heart be free as you will: let it go everywhere and touch everything: the finite also is open to it as well as

the infinite; and the minor pieties are not to retire or renounce their name before the greater. But then, for both there is this indispensable condition; viz. that the inward homage, whatever its direction, shall alight upon a *real object*, and not lose itself in the dilution of an endless search. When I am awed and subdued before the grace and grandeur of a moral superior, it is not because he *suggests*, but because he *realizes*, a higher conception of excellence: it is as a living agent, as a personal embodiment, of righteousness, that he wields authority over my conscience. Take away this element, tear the picture out of the volume of true history and cast it to the transient winds of imagination, and all is immediately changed. The image remaining the same, I may still admire; but no longer in grave silence, — rather with outspoken praise: of my compunction I am relieved: the strength of resolution is relaxed: the "lifting power" of a devout enthusiasm is gone; and if I have gained any new variety of thought, it is simply added to my culture, but does not transform my life. A conception which reports itself as empty of reality, even if it startles us into a momentary awe, can no more receive our reverent embrace than the shade of a departed ancestor or guide:

> Frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,
> Par levibus ventis, volucrique simillima somno.

There is nothing to sustain the worshipful influence of its presence: we cannot venerate our own idea. *Here* it is that "Moral Idealism" falls short of the conditions of Religion; not because it is ethical, while religion is something else; not because it works among finite relations, while religion is concerned only with the infinite; but because its ideal perfection is known to be only in our heads, while the ideal of religion must be also real. Strauss himself makes the memorable confession, that "none but a

book-student could ever imagine that a creation of the brain, woven of poetry and philosophy, can take the place of real Religion." [1]

To mark then the step of thought which crosses the line into the hemisphere of Religion: — it is made when we affirm that over us and in relation to us the All-perfect Mind *exists*. Devout faith is a belief of *real Being* on the strength of *what ought to be*. If you look at it from the outside, you may call it the apotheosis of moral aspiration: if you name it from the interior, you will say it is the revelation of God in the conscience. The former expression describes the ascent of my thought to its object; the latter, the descent of its object into my thought. As my purpose is at present only to clear the meaning and scope of words which are made mischievous by indeterminate use, I will not pause to vindicate the drawing of an ontological conclusion from a moral premise. It is not the only paradox of Reason into which we are irresistibly borne away by that wonderful conception of what *ought to be*. It introduces many convictions against which the logic of physical science is for ever chafing; but which take no notice of the rebuff, and continue to be bases of social law and invisible bonds of human life. To these criticisms, if time permits, I will devote a few words before I close. Just now I rest on the position that "Moral Idealism" is not Religion, unless the ideal is held to be *Real* as well as *Divine*.

To test this position, suppose the element of *Reality* to be now admitted, and now removed; and compare the natural working of the moral ideal under the two conditions, to see whether in both instances alike it is marked by the effects which experience shows to be characteristic of religion.

[1] Kaiser Julien; der Romantiker auf dem Throne der Cäsaren, S. 12.

Ever since the Epistle to the Romans was written, it has become a Christian commonplace that, in all moral experience, I am divided against myself; inwardly identified with a superior call that beckons me; outwardly liable to take my lot with the inferior inclination that clings to me. In such conflict, whatever be its issue, the *real* self is always that which votes for the good; conformably with Plato's rule, that no man, *of his own will* (though, possibly, of blind impulse), ever decides for the worse. If I choose aright, the previous strife is laid to rest, and my nature is at one with itself and its own ends. If I choose amiss, the storm within is fiercer than before; I rage against my own temptation; and if the fact be known, I am ashamed to walk abroad and carry about so false an image of myself. And thus it is with all men, so far as the moral life has developed its history in them. Set before them a just and righteous claim that demands them, and, if only you get the conception clear into their hearts, they are caught up into one spirit at the appeal, and muster as an army fresh from sleep. They feel, perhaps for the first time, that they are themselves, — that they never knew themselves before. They have emerged from a disguising cloud, and beneath the sunshine their very essence has found them out. With all of us, then, in some deep sense, the ideal self is the truly Real; and we disown as foreign whatever contradicts it.

Yet, in another sense, it is just this which is *unreal;* for it is never *realized:* it is something still *to be*, which not yet *is*. If you ask for the *actual* self, now and here, to-day and to-morrow, of each individual, it will be precisely that which he repudiates as the false one; wherein the struggle is *not over*, the temptation not banished, the unity not attained. Unless therefore fact itself is illusion, this other and relatively *evil* self is that which *really is*, both in each of us and in society. Yet, strange to say, it encoun-

ters a fate which befalls no other fact. Its right *to be a phenomenon* is disputed. Real as it is, it is *condemned for being there*, and has to skulk before an eternal protest which treats it as *marring reality*, and bids it take itself away.

What meaning then is to be put upon these two aspects of Reality, leading us at once to affirm and to deny it of the same object? To the Theist, the paradox easily resolves itself. That the moral consciousness on the one hand, and the observation of fact on the other, should give two measures of reality, does not surprise him. He sees in them only reflections in little of two corresponding functions of the universe at large, — viz. indwelling thought, ideal purpose, free creativeness, determining it towards all beauty and good; and finite material conditions for the externalization and progressive expression of its spiritual origin and end: i. e. *Mind*, eternally perfect; and *Nature*, perfectible by transition, — the one for ever *being*, the other only *becoming* (therefore partly *not* being) what it *ought to be*. Where the great whole consists of this permanent essence of reality and its partial negation, it is intelligible that both should report themselves in our derivative nature, and in their very lineaments claim their respective parentage, and by their native sympathies tend towards their home. In such a world there is no uncertain meaning in that consciousness of *a higher* that possesses me, — that sense of *authority* which every opening of duty brings, — that almost speaking appeal to my will that tells me, "This alone is right, and thou canst do it," — that terrible conviction incurred by all wrong-doing, that I have lost *myself* and become alienated from an infinitely better than myself. These experiences necessarily belong to the relation between the opening conscience of an incipiently free humanity and the righteousness of an eternally free and holy God. We simply accept them,

therefore, as telling us the truth: we *believe* our compunction, and have nothing to explain away in it: we do not construe it into a vain and illusory regret for what *had to be*, or think to rid ourselves of its demands by some apology or reparation to our fellows; but own to the full its grievous charge of a dereliction of a Divine trust, and shrink abashed before the eye of the Supreme Perfection.

At the same time, the consciousness that what I have realized in act is not the true Real, assures me that it has no roots and cannot stand; and that, just because I know this, I am not without the idea and love of that to which I have been faithless: so that the sacred affinity remains; the relation is not abolished; and hope springs up afresh. The local clouds of violated conscience cannot blot out the steadfast expression of eternal Will, all-embracing as the heavens: its everlasting eyes are over all, and know how to find the visual points in every answering mind. This objective persistence of a living Holiness is just the one steadying and sustaining power which condenses flying humors into force of conscience, and animates the waking toils of life with the glow of its divinest dreams. The women whom you could not frighten, and the men whom you could not move to say the false or do the wrong, — have they not been pre-eminently (I do not say exclusively) those who stood face to face with the Living Judge of Right, and in their own incorruptible perception heard His voice, "Stand fast, for I am with you"? — a voice which at once guarantees the possibility and completes the sanctity of the felt duty. Is it possible to deny that such conviction, with the habits of inward piety which it creates, naturally imparts stability to the will and elevation to the affections?

But this conviction, we are told, is "Metaphysical": it affirms an existence beyond phenomena; and from our religion we are to take all Metaphysics away. Be it

so: then our "Moral Idealism" loses its objective hold, and becomes a mere subjective exercise of imagination: and the question is whether this will still serve as well. The change (may we not say?) amounts to a removal of the ideal from the moral to the æsthetic field; whereby, though it may fix my admiration, it parts with all immediate relation to my will; for it contains in it no assurance of either its *authority* or its *possibility*, any more than is contained in the artist's dream of a statue nobler than the Apollo, or a picture more touching than the San Sisto. The bare conception of a better in character, rising in the imagination and known to be an imagination, no more touches the springs of action with the sense of what I ought to do and be, than the conception of brighter wits or finer person or happier lot. Any vain longing which it may excite is but like the wish that last night's dream were not *only* a dream, and is as likely to depress me with a nerveless feeling of inferiority as to lift me into strenuous faith. It is the peculiarity of the visions of conscience, — that which marks them off from all other play of ideality, — that they cannot be purely egoistic, and in becoming such would drop their very essence; that to a lonely, unrelated mind they would be intrinsically impossible; that they profess to come to us upon a mission, to destroy our absolutism and plant us beneath a higher which has a right to the homage of our will. If this profession be not true, the moral insight itself becomes illusory; and to detect the fraud thus put upon us is simply to break the back of all moral power, and release the will from every pressure graver than the light weights of fancy. What seemed to be looking at us with such Divine appealing eyes is but a flattered portrait of ourselves: the tones that so deeply pierced us are but our own falsetto voice: there is neither substance in the sight, nor truth in the sound: let us pass on, as though they were not. Life,

upon such terms, would be like one of those dual games, of chess or cards, in which a solitary player cheats his loneliness by personating the pair, and suffers a fictitious defeat by his own intentional mistake, and wins a hollow triumph by outwitting himself. It no less *takes two* to deliver the game of Duty from trivial pretence and give it an earnest interest. How can I look up to myself as the higher that reproaches me? — issue commands to myself which I dare not disobey? — ask forgiveness from myself for sins which myself has committed? — surrender to myself with a martyr's sacrifice? — and go through all the drama of moral conflict and enthusiasm between myself in a mask and myself in *propriâ personâ?* How far are these "emotional" semblances, these battles in the clouds, to carry their mimicry of reality? Are we to *worship* the self-ideality; to *pray* to an empty image in the air; to trust, in sorrow, a creation of thought which is but a phenomenon of sorrow? No; if religious communion is reduced to a monologue, its essence is extinct and its soul is gone. It is a living relation, or it is nothing; — a response to the Supreme Reality. And vainly will you search for your spiritual dynamics without the Rock Eternal for your ποῦ στῶ.

But perhaps it will be said that the moral ideal, when traced through its history, is not purely subjective, although at present a phenomenon of the individual consciousness; since it comes to us from minds other than our own; both concentrating and reflecting the social sentiment by whose light we see and in whose air we breathe; and also storing up an indefinite inheritance of ancestral judgments of character, not only transmitted by descent, but looking down on us from the portrait-galleries of history and permeating the whole substance of literature. The standards of excellence to which admiration and reverence turn have actually formed themselves, it is urged, outside of us:

they are not personal inventions which we might weave *in vacuo;* but are presented to us as the objective fruit of human experience, the last distillation of good when all foreign ingredients are left behind; and it is not therefore without reason that we refuse to interpret them as egoisms, and feel them as claims upon us rather than as fancies within us. They *do* speak to us with an external authority; but this authority it is enough to treat as *social*, without attributing to it anything transcendental and divine. Why may we not, it is asked, set our foot on this reality, and so regain the missing power? This objection proceeds from those who regard the moral sentiment as communicated rather than indigenous, — as partly borrowed in our own time from other minds, and partly a legacy in our organism from a long past. They are ready to assent to Mr. Sidgwick's statement that "on the conception of the objectivity of duty the authority of the moral sentiment depends;"[1] but think that, since *they* have detected its rudiments and conditions of growth in external experience, *its* conception of the objectivity of duty is provided for and justified. The fallacy is obvious. It is one thing for a sentiment to owe its existence to outward conditions; it is another to carry in its meaning an objective reference: to grow from without inwards is not to look from within outwards; and the objectivity we here investigate is not in the genesis of the conception, but in its contents. Its inherent *belief* of an authority beyond us is not explained by discovering for the sentiment a foreign origin, physiological and psychological, of which we are wholly unconscious. The discovery is *yours*, not *ours;* and its very merit for your genius depends on its having

[1] Methods of Ethics: Supplement to 1st Edition, p. 45. See also 1st Ed. p. 62. "That in us which claims authority is never a mere sentiment, but always a faculty cognizant of an objective rule or imperative which exists independently of its effect on our feelings."

been a secret to our thought. The objective sources of our moral feeling are absolutely hidden from it: its objective authority is absolutely clear to it: to identify the two is to affirm that the same thing may be simultaneously in consciousness and out of it.

Suppose, however, the fallacy removed from this analysis by our becoming conscious of the actual origin of our moral ideal, viz. progenitors in the past, society in the present; so that, thus far, there is no hindrance to our finding in them the "objective authority," the "imperative" rule independent of our own feelings, which the sense of duty carries in it. Still, there is another fatal disqualification in them for recognition as the real object of our reverence and the ideal standard of our aspirations. They are simply the general aggregate of social sentiment in our own and prior generations, the average of expected character through the ages of which we are the sons: for no means are suggested for filtering the descending stream and dropping its impurities as it flows, — its animal taint, its false admirations, its bitter selfishness, — and securing for us only the sweet waters of life. Can we say then that what is *thus* presented to us is *higher* than we, — higher, moreover, than our noblest and best men, in whom also and with intenser eye the conscience retains its upward look? No; historical and actual Society constitutes, by its opinions, a force larger indeed, stronger, more enduring than we; but not even approaching our own ideal, much less passing away beyond it towards infinitude. Nay more; social opinions are either the expression of conscience already there, and then they are the effect of the very ideal they are supposed to form; or, they tell simply what men like and dislike and mean to insist upon with each other; and then they are not moral at all; the influence which proceeds from them is coercive only, not sacred, — compressing reluctant wills, but releasing none

into a free enthusiasm. The objectivity, therefore, which is supplied to us by this doctrine is of the wrong kind for drawing forth the homage of reverent affection, and can offer only the blankest disappointment to any true moral idealism.

Besides, if the object in which the authority rests is a continuous and universal social will, it is for us a mere abstraction, in resorting to which we are aware that it is a figment or economy of thought, which cannot really exercise rights over us or claim any rational veneration. However subject we may be to impose upon ourselves by giving substance to such mental creations, they can never wield over us the power of concrete being, unless within their epitome images gleam forth of individual persons and visible scenes that have become endeared. Thus there is a magic in such words as *home* and *country*, through the generality of which faces look at us, and fields and villages are seen: and these may become the occasion of some minor idolatries of the heart, shaping themselves, however, into the innocent forms of conscious personification and fervent song. But abstractions which have no such contents, — e. g. Law, Reason, Wealth, Opinion, — whatever pranks they may play with our Logic, cannot persuade us to bow down and worship them. If the only *object* you have to offer for human homage be an impersonal conception of this kind, it is easy to see what will become of our religion under the change. We have only to substitute for the familiar terms of personal piety, which speak of "God" and the human "Soul," any of their supposed modern equivalents when the "Metaphysics" are discharged, and then estimate the gain or loss. Will then the Benedicite swell with the same tones of joy, when it has to sing, — "Bless the *Eternal Law*, all ye its works; bless the Eternal Law, O my synthesis of organs"? Will the contrition which now cries, — "Blot out my transgres-

sions," "Cast me not away," "A broken heart Thou dost not despise," pour out its sorrows to a deaf "ideal," and shed its passionate tears on an abstraction that cannot wipe them away? Will any moonlit form be seen kneeling in our Gethsemanes, and rising from prostrate anguish to sublime repose through the prayer, "O thou *Eternal Not-ourselves that makest for righteousness*, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt"? Will any Crucified one lose the bitterness of Death in crying, "*O Stream of Tendency*, into thy hands I commit my spirit"? And to the Martyr, stoned to death, will any Heaven open and any Vision come, when he exclaims, "*Great Ensemble of Humanity*, receive me"? For my part, I cherish the hope that our unsatisfied "Modern Thinker," after vain trial of such devotions, may return to his rest, and say with a natural reversion of heart, "O Thou once Unknown, I thank Thee that though Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, Thou hast revealed them unto babes."

Our comparison, then, of the effects on life of the subjective and objective ideal sums itself up in this: that without *personal relations* between the Human and the Divine, Religion is divested of all its higher attributes and intenser forces: it loses its link with morals: it ceases to transfigure the affections: it relinquishes its grasp upon the will. It was by emphasizing these relations that Judaism became indomitable; and by universalizing them that Christianity laid hold of the foremost nations and rose into the foremost faith of mankind; creating and diffusing a heart-worship, a self-reverence and self-surrender, a depth of spiritual experience, a literature of character and devotion, and a breadth of social compassion, which are the redeeming features of modern civilization. To paralyze these relations is to relapse into Paganism, —

a Paganism, too, with emptying temples and retreating gods, — and to set up again the mutual play of Man and Nature, with the sanctity lost from both. The needs of the future cannot be provided for by any such helpless reaction, which forfeits what we have gained by reversion to what has been discarded; but only by ascending to a more commanding point, whence contrasts melt in harmony, and the outlooks to the right and to the left are embraced in one horizon and form but undulations of one world.

An undertone of pathetic regret may sometimes be heard in even the most confident critics of Christian Theism; as if, in substituting their abstractions, they were conscious in their hearts of administering a dangerous anæsthetic to Religion, which might leave it speechless and paralytic, if it even survived at all. They plead, however, that the risk must be run; and that, to save any remnant of moral life, the organism of faith must suffer excision of some members which have hitherto been the seat of an intense vitality. Men have always taken for granted that the Supreme Power "thinks and loves;" but the critics have now laid it down that these predicates "cannot be *verified*," — a dictum which, giving no account of itself, relies for its effect on mere supercilious iteration. If, in Mr. Arnold's vocabulary, to "verify" means to "*test by experiment*," the complaint is true, but irrelevant: the inner attributes of the Supreme Cause cannot be submitted to Baconian experiments, with registered results tabulated under "Sic" and "Non." Yet their exemption from this criterion does not discredit their existence: for if a Divine Mind were really there, and in its essence were purely and only Thought and Love, it would equally transcend the interrogations of our experience. It is not by such methods that spiritual truths can be extorted. But if "*to justify by sufficient reason*" is here equivalent to "verification," the

complaint, though relevant, is unfounded: for we are guided by no other reason in attributing thought and love to our fellow-men than that which warrants our ascription of them to God. In neither case have we any *immediate* apprehension of these invisible affections of mind: in *that* degree of closeness they are known only as exercised by ourselves: in others we read them only by having thus learned their signs; and precisely the signs which assure us that we are not in a mad-house, but among companions directed by intelligence and moved by sympathy, repeat themselves in the legible order, beauty, and tendencies of the world. *So* similar are the marks in the two instances, that if intellect and feeling are allowed their causality in the one, legitimate induction (as Mr. Mill himself insists) requires their admission in the other: they must operate in both, or else in neither. How cogent this resemblance is, curiously appears from the fact that, with our modern men of science, it has become usual to accept this dilemma; and, as they will not admit Mind to be operative in Nature, they actually deny its efficiency in us. Both are automata alike; and all would go on the same, mechanically unrolling the scenery of life and history, though the superfluous appendage of consciousness were cut off. It is beyond the scope of my subject to criticise this pretended completion, but real subversion, of the philosophy of Descartes. Far be it from me to deny that in this, its last exploit, Reason has fairly done for itself and proved its own inefficacy. The interest of the speculation for the present consists in this, — that the parallelism between the Universe and Man is plainly indestructible; that the exclusion of intellectual power from Nature cancels it also in us; and that its self-assertion in us rationally secures its presence and its sway in Nature. If Nature is automatic only, so are we: if we are actuated by thought and love, so is Nature. The parallelism used to be denied: it is

now admitted; and the ultimate "verification" is thrown back upon our fundamental self-knowledge of action from purpose and affection. There we may be content to leave it.

I conclude, therefore, as I began, with deprecating the separation between what are called the "Metaphysics" and the Ethics of our supreme beliefs. These beliefs, whose fertilizing influence is first felt far lower down, are found, when followed upwards to their springs, to have two co-ordinate sources, — one in the intellectual, the other in the moral region of our nature; the former bringing us to a transcendent *Cause;* the latter, to a transcendent *Righteousness;* together finding their unity in an Eternal *Will*. The exigencies of thought in dealing with its ultimate problems may require us, and the artifices of analysis may enable us, to contemplate them as distinct, and assign to them their respective lines of descent upon and through the mind and character. But this detachment is *our* work, not *theirs;* — not a fact of life, but an illusion of the schools. In the common sense and feeling of men, and in the faith of Christ, they perfectly blend, and in blending support and complete each other; and no such strange paradox meets us, as the conception of a Universal Cause that has no character, or a Perfect Righteousness that has no Causality. The final object of the Reason and the final home of the Conscience are the same: these faculties are but the two wings that bear us thither; and if you disable either, we vainly struggle and never rise. Religion that is *mere* metaphysics offers us but a pale and icy reality: "Religion *without* metaphysics" offers us but a painted dream.

The truth of which the new doctrine is a caricature is perhaps this: — that the *progressive element* of Religion is to be found in an ever-expanding moral ideal as human experience enlarges and the human conscience increases

its refinement and its range. New social perplexities of duty, new sufferings for compassion, new virtues for veneration, new temptations for conquest, enter the field as the ages open, and leave the old formulas of righteous life inadequate: and in nothing will a true piety show itself more than in freely embracing its more comprehensive trust, and suffering no filaments of habit to detain it from a higher perfectness. On the ontological side of Religion, — in the conception of Primal Being and Power, — there is no such process of advance: it is a fixed thought, and, as a necessary idea of Reason, does not add to its contents, but remains "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Precisely, however, on this account is it the indispensable substratum for the moving images and varying colors of goodness and beauty as they unfold. Without a permanent there can be no change; and the Ideal which for ever grows must in its essence be secured upon the Real. It is idle to talk of evolution and laws of phenomenal advance, as if they superseded all beyond themselves. "Phenomena" of nothing, "Evolution" of emptiness, — what are such phrases but a Greek and Latin gibberish? To make a show of itself, there must be something behind: to develop itself, there must be a plenitude within: the very words bespeak the whole reality they are intended to deny.

And unless we are to throw away all idea of homogeneity and proportion between cause and effect, and between instinctive tendency and its fulfilment, the Rational and the Moral in us can neither have their beginning nor reach their end, in the absence of Divine Reason and Divine Right. If our human experience teaches us anything certain, it is this: that it is Thought which kindles thought, and Love which elicits love, and Character which moulds and refines character; and *that*, not *upwards*, the inferior prevailing to better the superior; but *downwards*, the greater

lifting the less. To reverse this order, to educe Mind from what is not yet mind, and Conscience from blind and neutral force, is to put more into the effect than the cause provides, and *ipso facto* to convict the explanation of incompetency. And similarly when we face round to see whither our nature looks instead of whence it comes, we find not an appetency, affection, or energy of our being, that fails to meet its fitting *object:* through the range of the animal, the domestic, the social life, the several relations, of which one term is within us, complete themselves by hitting upon the other in the external scene. The scientific intellect slakes its thirst on the order and beauty of the world; and even when it ventures, in sympathy with the *style* of nature, on guesses and forecasts too daring for immediate belief, its vaticinations have often struck the truth. Is then this analogy to be first broken when we reach the highest levels of our humanity? Are we *there* flung out of all relations, though still furnished with their inward drift and cry? — still sent to seek, with prejudgment that we shall not find? If we are to assume any concinnity in our nature, or any harmony of it with its theatre of being, such disappointment of its ends carries in it an improbability revolting to the Reason. And can then the "Moral Idealism" step in and deliver us? Yes; if it speaks to us, not in its own name, but in that of its Inspirer; if it stands before the Living God, taking thence its inner power and sending thither its secret prayer, and can utter its prophecies as foregleams of His righteous Will. At such a voice, Conscience becomes transfigured from human to Divine, and life on earth is turned into a "kingdom of heaven." But if, because its God is dead, it can only display its own imaginings, and propose them in tones of personal suggestion, without an organic faith to integrate them with the possible and the intended, it will wield no persuasive influence, but speak as a prophet ere yet the live coal has

touched his lips. Its visions will pale and fade; its promises dissolve in unreality; and the sickened conscience that has trusted to it, sink into helpless debility. Human life is too strong for the grasp of spiritual æsthetics: let it remain within the hold of the All-ruling hand.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

[No. 66]

THE RELATION

BETWEEN

ETHICS AND RELIGION.

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU, D.D., LL.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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THE RELATION BETWEEN ETHICS AND RELIGION.

Christendom, through all its vicissitudes, has preserved a distinctive moral physiognomy, giving to its history and literature an interest very different from that which attaches to Pagan times. Its eye has been fixed on an image of perfection variously unlike the heroes and sages of Greece and Rome. But, notwithstanding this practical unity of moral reverence through eighteen centuries, the attitude of the Christian Church towards the theoretic study of Ethics is marked by striking contradictions. It was impossible for the priesthood to work the system of *Confession*, and save it from a chaos of discrepancies, without classifying and assimilating decisions distant in time and place, and gradually eliciting, from this mass of *case-law*, a body of principles and rules applicable to the whole contents of human temptation and perplexity. Through her library of Casuistry, the Catholic Church has become the parent of our modern Moral Philosophy, and has conveyed into it her own assumption that the right guidance of life is inseparable from the functions of religion. On the other hand, Luther, denying all religious value to Morals, flung them, as a mere matter of police, into the hands of the civil magistrate. And the first volume of the "Congregational Lectures" instituted about half a century ago was written to prove that Christianity repudiates Ethics as *ab initio* impossible to the vitiated reason and conscience of a fallen nature. The study thus ignominiously cast out to the "infidel," he

in his turn is very ready to pick up, all the more from its being unencumbered with theology. He has quite a right to take these divines at their word and refute them by effecting, if he can, on independent ground, the construction which is declared impossible. We cannot be surprised that the supercilious airs of the religious towards Morals should in due season be assumed by the moralist towards Religion; and that, at least in the high moods of both, a divorce should be agreed upon as the only end of strife. And so we see offended Philosophy building its palace and setting up its separate establishment as far as possible from the Church, without even a window looking upon the Abbey towers. A quiet observer who loves them both may hold his peace and be content with his own sorrow at their averted looks; but may well doubt whether a wedlock beginning with the devout enthusiasm of youth, consecrated by long fellowship in trial and in victory, and attested by noble offspring that bear the features of both parents, can be permanently repented of; and will rather believe that, when the crisis of hurt pride and harassed spirits has passed, returning memories will draw from each, unconfessed to the other, frequent tears of reconciliation. Some natural feeling of this kind with regard to the present alienation between Ethical doctrine and Religious, suggests to me a few remarks on the real relation between the two.

Ethics treat of the right-ordering of Personal Relations, so far as these may be made better or worse by our will.

The terms of this definition, though not obscure, it may be well to unfold by a few words of comment.

Personal Relations constitute the prior condition and very matter itself of Morality, and in their absence it has no room to be. An absolutely solitary individual, if invested with power of various action and disposition, might affect himself for better or worse by what he did, but would be subject to no obligation and incur no guilt. The harm

he occasioned would be a blunder and not a sin: the good which he earned would prove his wisdom, not his virtue. If, instead of being lonely on the field of life, he has companions sentient but only animal, he enters on semi-personal relations and wakes to the first rudiments of Duty; the sensibilities of the creatures around him stirring in him two or three of the springs of action, whose relative worth, when more largely realized, fills up the contents of Conscience. Though his companions are not his peers, related to him as he is to them, yet it is in virtue of what they have in common with human nature that they are qualified to teach him the first lesson of Character.

Where the two natures are thus unequal, the morality which is rendered possible by their presence together is obviously limited to that one which is personal: the other is the occasion of duty in him without becoming liable to any reciprocal obligation. A parrot, kindly and rightly treated by his owner, will repay the pains bestowed on his education by amusing accomplishments and friendly ways. But these habits, moulded by the discipline of pleasure and pain, have not the ethical quality with which the master's action is tinctured; being no objects of ideal choice, but outwardly shaped by application of the physiological forces which dispose of the organism. The mere capacity of an animal for being "broken in," i. e. for being modified in its action through fear and hope, does not constitute personality or confer responsibility; and no integral moral relation arises until both natures are homogeneous and both personal.

Hence it follows that the relation, as ethically regarded, includes, besides the adjustment of external action, an indispensable concomitant of internal thought or feeling: for it is just here, i. e. in the absence of preferential consent or intention, that the animal obedience is defective. To say that *personal* relations are essentially *mental*

relations, is to say that the essential business of Ethics is with the *inner springs of action.*

Once more: our definition presupposes that the personal relations "may be made better or worse by our will." If I am master of no such alternative, if at each moment only one thing is possible to me, or if, out of two, neither is better than the other, I am the subject simply of natural law, not of moral. Differences of tendency may still be the object of scientific investigation, like differences of stature or digestion: but there is nothing to distinguish the study of what *ought to be* from the study of what *is;* and Ethics pluck up their fence and surrender their field to psychology, — unless indeed the biologist, who has long been squatting there, has already got too firm a hold.

Now, for Ethics thus defined I do not ask for any other place of birth and exercise than the common life of persons together; i. e. a human Society. That scene contains within itself adequate provision for their growth in individuals and their consolidation into Law: there is no need for them to be superimposed *ab extra*, added on as an appendix to the constitution of the world, as if they had been forgotten or too little emphasized in its substantive design. Whoever thinks, by insisting on such a supplement to an original humanity, to win a celestial sanctity for the law of righteousness, defeats his own object: he parts the two elements which he wishes to blend, and by way of making Religion necessary makes Morals impossible. For, to a nature from which Conscience has been omitted, no Law can ever be sacred, no right and wrong ever be revealed. It may be externally reduced to rule: but whatever conformity with order is thus produced is worthless as the genuflections of an automaton or the mimicry of an ape: whatever is willed on other grounds than its inherent excellence is foreign to the sphere of character. Without inward appreciation of that excellence in its several degrees and con-

senting adoption of it for its own sake, goodness cannot be: and if a Creator, in projecting a moral world, should omit to render this appreciation immanent in the nature of its people, no repairing message could overtake the defect. Thunders of command, tables of law, oracles of instruction, may terrify their imagination, engage their memory, increase their knowledge; but will not penetrate beyond the vestibule of their mind, for want of interpreter to unlock the sanctuary within.

But if for our purpose we do not require more than human nature, neither can we put up with less. We cannot dispense with any of its essential contents. In order to build up a system of relations ethically organized, we must start with men and not beasts; i. e. with beings not blindly thrust hither and thither by chance instincts, but conscious of difference in their impulses, and directed by concurrent intelligence. Take away this common base of harmony; suppose, with Hobbes, each individual set up for himself as a separate centre of repulsion, with an assertive appetite for all that he can touch, resolute to get all he can and surrender only what he must; and whatever equilibrium you may elicit from these data is not a moral equilibrium: it is but the Statics of desolating passion, not the Dynamics of ordered and unresting affections, and can only constitute, as Hobbes himself insisted, the enthronement of Force and the negation of all baffled Right. I will not say that no community could thus be formed and hold together, though even the gregarious habit of animals is not the product of mere self-love: but I do say that the bond on which it depends is not ethical or distinctively human; that it is the theatre of interests only and not of duties; and that its material — the mutilated essence of humanity — does not supply an adequate school for the unfolding of a private or public conscience.

Or shall I be corrected here, and asked to see in this

material, not the "*mutilated*," but rather the *uncompleted and inchoate* essence of humanity? Will it be said that Hobbes, in omitting some elements which he need not have denied to our self-knowledge, only anticipated the theory of Evolution, and astutely surmised the process through which the brute nature had become the human? and have we to confess it as at least an established probability that the adequate cause of orderly society is the "primitive savage;" — of human rights, the violence of wrong; — of thought, sensation; — of sensation, organic structure; — of organism, the inorganic; and so on through the stages of the "beautifully less," till we reach the zero, where plus and minus keep house together and become the Adam and Eve of all things? Be it so. For aught I know, the remote progenitor of a biped may be a quadruped, or a centipede: do you expect me then to place these creatures among moral beings? or to rank man with the unmoral? or to say that between moral and unmoral there is no real difference? Am I to think that when the conditions are provided which will set up an Ascidian, nothing more is wanted to make sure of an Aristotle and a Shakespeare, an Antonine and an Alfred the Great? I must decline to accept any such equation between the minimum of causation and the maximum of effect, and must supply in thought whatever is needed to cover the total difference, in quantity and quality, between the insignificant beginning and the majestic end. Whether the bodily forms which enshrine this enormous increment of creative power are of a million types or the continuity of one, is a question interesting to the naturalist, but in no way critical to the moral philosopher: the consciousness of guilt is just as far from toothache or hunger when lodged in the same type of organism with them, as when put into another invented for its sake. Let it appear when and where it may, it is a thing *sui generis*, which disowns an utterly heterogene-

ous source, and, though co-existing with dissimilar functions, can no more be deduced thence than vision from hearing. If you have nothing to work with but animal pleasures and pains, and unlimited time for their experience and transmission, you can never hope, through all eternity, to build up a conscience; or, if you do, you build up what your data will not support, and you will have to let fall as an illusion. Inherited accumulation of expediencies may account for an ever quicker and finer and larger sense of expediency, but for nothing else; as an infinitude of sand-grains may make a shore, and an infinitude of drops a sea, but neither effect can take the place of the other. Add as long as you will, if the items of the sum are all prudences, the total will not come out as a duty. To this truth Mr. Herbert Spencer himself bears conclusive witness: for, while he undertakes to show how, from sentient experiences, the idea of obligation obtains its *de facto* origin, he insists that *de jure* it has no business to be there; and that we should never have it, did we not misread our inward history, for want of his clear psychologic light. He gives its genesis in order to exhibit it, not as a legitimate derivative, but as a detected error; and accordingly infers that "the sense of duty or moral obligation is transitory" and "fades,"[1] like any other illusion. What more emphatic proclamation can be made that, operating with a merely animal and not a personal humanity, you can never justify the Ethical life or admit the possibility of an Ethical Science? For both have their very focus in this superseded sentiment of Duty; whence radiate all the affections characteristic of the one, and all the lines of meaning which define the language of the other. Instead of discrediting the highest stage at present reached by our nature and putting faith only in its lowest groundwork of sense and impulse, we may reasonably invert the

[1] Data of Ethics, p. 127.

order, and estimate the beginning by the end, and refuse to treat the nature as present till the whole of it is there.

But now let us suppose all these naturalistic theories and weakening conditions removed out of the way, and full play to be given, in a human society, to the ethical conditions and affections, in their present degree of maturity; and represent to ourselves the form of character which, in their isolation, they tend to produce. United with others in a common moral nature, we take for granted a fundamental agreement about right and wrong, and never hesitate, in case of apparent divergence, to rely on its removal by seeking coincidence at an earlier point. We regard ourselves, therefore, as all under a common rule by which each must be tried, and which is as little variable as any self-evident maxim of common sense, and by their several degrees of conformity to which or deviation from it we range men on the scale of righteousness or guilt. This rule, however, we are aware, is not an imperative definition of action, but a relative valuation of motive: and as the same preference of motive may give rise to any one of several acts, and the same act proceed from any one of several attitudes of motive, the conditions of the problem are always interior and out of sight: so that our judgments, if formed on *conduct* alone, are liable to go far astray: of its *wisdom or folly* we have a ready calculus in its *consequences*; its *goodness or guilt* we can only presume by surmising its invisible principle.

Judgment in other matters assumes no more than a determinate criterion of value: Ethical judgment assumes besides a personal power of conforming to it. To criticise an elm as awry and a man's stature as short, it is enough that you have the idea of a symmetrical tree and a well-proportioned figure: in criticising another's character, you presuppose that he has the true idea as well as you, and that it rests with him to realize it; that he

knows his duty and can do it. It cannot be denied that the whole system of moral conceptions, feelings and language, rests upon the belief in Free Will, and deals with man as (within its particular range) the real cause of what he is and does. But for this, who could suffer compunction for a lie any more than for a squint, or shame for delirium tremens more than for a typhoid fever, or feel more indignant disgust at the crimes of a Cæsar Borgia than at the rapacity of a wolf? Remorse for sin would be impossible but for the consciousness that it lies at our door: and the blame with which we visit the guilt of another is measured by the merited self-reproaches of his own heart. It is vain to pretend that we praise and condemn, approve and disapprove, the acts of another in order to procure their repetition or arrest, — making an investment in good words with an eye to a suitable return; and that, except to modify the future, we should have no such feeling to express. These moral sentiments are distinctly retrospective, judicial sentences upon the past, and estimates of present character, and *not* a device for managing something yet to come: and their undoubted influence on the human will as incentives and restraints depends on their just estimate of what is irrevocably committed, and would be spoiled if they were understood to be a mere policy of expectation. The modern determinist frankly admits that the postulate of freedom does underlie the ordinary experiences and judgments of the Conscience; and only draws the conclusion — "So much the worse for them." Remorse, in his eyes, is an absurdity; repentance, a weakness; merit and demerit, with all the feelings they excite, fancies due to our ignorance of causes; responsibility, a mistake, if it means more than that no act is without its consequences; and duty, an imaginary bond, unless understood simply of men's reasonable expectations from you. As these ideas and affections are such integral parts

of the Ethical disposition that it is difficult to see what is left of it when they are gone, I cannot be wrong in setting down the faith in Free Will among its characteristics. Whether the faith is true or not, it is no part of my present purpose to inquire. But of its effect upon the side of our nature to which it attaches itself, an idea may be given by a pregnant remark of Spinoza's, that towards a being supposed to be free, affections far more intense will be felt than towards one under necessity.[1] If this be so, we must assign to the type of character we are considering, not only an extended range, but an exceptional energy, of affection.

If Ethics pure and simple have for their object the right-ordering of personal relations, then in the absence of personal relations they will have nothing to say. In proportion as action and feeling have only reflex influence upon ourselves, escaping all contact with the lives of others, we shall regard them, from this point of view, as not falling within the scope of duty, and shall assert our freedom from every claim. Not that the hypothesis of isolation can ever be completely realized till the world is composed of desert islands, with a man apiece: but there are various near approaches to lonely exercises of will, secret corners of the mind and life where others seem to have no right of entrance; and if there we take a dispensation from all that intermeddles with our self-regards, and assume an unqualified independence, we shall not sensibly depart from our fundamental conception of morals. Every one must be conscious of at least occasional temptations to "do what he likes with his own;" and it is but an extension of this temper that is so often seen in the combination of strict honor and noble conscientiousness in public and social affairs with deplorable anarchy of personal habit.

[1] Ethica III. Pr. xlix.

For the group of ideas and affections hitherto described we need look no further than the experiences of human society. The peculiar cast of character which emerges from their dominance is singularly wholesome, the very staff of sustenance for the normal good of the world; not rich and rare, as the wine of genius or the fruits of art, but welcome as the "daily bread" which better fits our daily prayer and meets our constant need. The sense of Duty is to our humanity what gravitation is to the physical universe: and the solid natures in which it masses itself restrain whatever is erratic, and bend dependent minds into orderly movement. What counterpoise have we against the delirium of passion, the grasp of cupidity, the phthisis of romance, but the indomitable faithfulness of men who take no counsel but of their conscience, whom no pretences can beguile, no threats dismay, who look truth and right straight in the face, and, if they see a neglected duty, seize it for their own, "proniores ad officia, quod spernebantur"? These are the men who feel sure that, if a thing is right, it must be possible: and this faith in human causality, extinguishing the sense of difficulty, sweeps from their path the ideal obstacles which, far more than any substantial checks, arrest the energies of weaker natures. For the simply conscientious, no interval is visible, or even conceivable, between perceiving the best and executing it. No line for them is so straight as that from thought to action. Doubtless a mere sprinkling of such righteous souls may suffice at times to avert destruction from a perishing community.

At the same time, where the tension of conscience is pitched thus high, more is expected from the reason and moral sense of others than they will be found to give. He who simply wields his freedom does not understand the slavery of more ordinary minds: from the dependent he demands independence; from the frivolous, devotedness;

from the self-indulgent, sacrifice. And when these exactions remain without response, he never suspects that he has laid too heavy a trust upon the hampered and sickened human causality, but pours out reproaches on the apathy and shortcomings of others. Seeing only what might have been had they but done their part, he criticises and scolds, and contracts a temper censorious and unsympathetic, with scarcely hope enough to sustain his unaided fidelity. His disappointment in their perversity does but increase the rigidity of his own convictions: losing all tenderness and gaining no humility, he falls out of tune with the affections and wills that are his sole allies. He cannot reach the hearts of men. He wonders how it is that his moral reforms make so little way. He has shown their reasonableness: the proof is complete: assent is not refused: but somehow the springs of power are not there! To what degree of repulsiveness this type of character may descend, can be unknown only to the happy few who have never met with the rational and ethical prig who has alighted upon some short cut to the perfection of the world, and goes about offering with solemn assurance the universal pill that is to cure our sins and reinstate us tomorrow in Paradise. Many a projector of this order has it been my lot to know. With adequate self-complacency, he is perhaps the most comfortable, but the dreariest of mortals; persuaded that he has the secret of omnipotence, and smitten with utter ineffectiveness; for ever turning the barrel of a dead organ which has no tune to any but himself. It would be a relief if he would but be angry at his failure, curse the evils he cannot heal, and take offence at the nature of things which baffles him. Give me rather the passionate invective of the pessimist, who at least is moved by pity to his defiance, and, if he cannot have the universe on his side, is content to spend himself in struggling against it on behalf of suffering humanity. Better to

remonstrate, like Job, with the order of nature, than, like his friends, to ignore it: thus far its Infinite Author is "a Jealous God;" He will sooner bear to be denounced than to be forgot.

Why is it that pure moral ideas may result in so imperfect a type of character, and moral reforms in effects so feeble? What is amiss with them? Are they not true? Are they not good? Whence then their impotence? Yes, they are both; but, so long as the horizon of humanity shuts in their view, there is a larger truth, there is an infinite good, beyond their little field of vision, the light and warmth of which no sooner flow in than they kindle both the seer and the seen with a new glow, turning assent into enthusiasm, and suffusing a rugged world with divine beauty. The affections hitherto noticed arise from the contemplation of *human* causality, and receive their shock because they have not reckoned with the boundless store beyond, and are confused by its inrush upon their schemes. The Conscience, as thus far regarded, has played the part of righteous judge between man and man, never doubting that its right-ordering of personal relations was herein complete; and if its judgments have been uttered with too little majesty of voice, and have gained but faint obedience from listening hearts, may it not be because there is one personal relation left unrealized, — the crown and interpreter of all, — their inward sanctity, their embracing glory? If Ethics are to cover the entire ground of *character*, and if in our character there be a part which has reference to the Infinitude which surrounds our life, a system of thought, a type of feeling, which omits this part and treats it as though it were not, can be but a truncated moral structure, resembling the whole much as a Gothic Hôtel de Ville resembles a cathedral without its transepts and its towers.

So long as Duty is regarded as a human self-enactment,

it involves no personal relations except of men *inter se*. Treated as a factor in our egoistic psychology, the idea is taken as merely subjective and coming from ourselves. Treated as a social product fastened upon each individual by his fellows, it comes from our equals. In the former case, it ranks with any other phenomenon of our history: in the other, it stands on the level of a coercion or a convention among associates. In neither case does it speak to us from a superior, or carry in it any imperative right. If it is the voice of our fellows, it may be louder, but is not auguster than our own; if it is an altercation between two desires of the self, each may contradict the other without making good its title to command the whole. Within a unit, or where life is all upon one plane, Obligation cannot be, but only conflict and equilibrium of Force; and hence the fatal weakness of the Moralist who, after planting our nature in this position, continues to talk of what it *ought* to be. He eviscerates Duty, and turns it into a mummy, and then expects it to get up and walk. It is the total failure of a Supreme Authority, not of compelling strength but of pleading Perfection, that paralyzes him, and constrains him to fly before the first fanatic mob that sweeps the field in the name of the Holy Ghost. The law which he asserts, another can deny; and that which is made by men to-day may be unmade by men to-morrow; and no preacher of such shifting relativity of truth and righteousness will ever speak home to the undying needs of the human conscience.

Is he then forbidden by veracity to speak in any higher name than his own? In his private controversies of temptation, when the argument is at its height between some splendid treachery and a guiltless ignominy, is the difference between them preached to him in his own name? Did he institute it? Was it his will that planted it out visibly in the frame of things and the hearts of men? Is

his consciousness of it simply a play to and fro of his particular ideas, and their eager polemic only a soliloquy? Is it not rather a reality, — an eternal reality, — that looks in upon him and speaks to him? And has he not to own in it an *Authority* which is so far from being of his setting up, that his whole personality bows in homage to it, — an authority so different from mere Power, that Omnipotence itself could neither create nor cancel it? Now *authority* expresses a relation, not between mind and things, but between mind and mind: no physical object, no unconscious phenomenon, can exercise it: it is a purely personal attribute, a tie of dependence between the higher and the lower; and, wherever it is felt, there are two minds present with each other in uplooking and uplifting attitude. Thus in the ultimate penetralia of the conscience the Living Spirit of God himself is met, it may be unconsciously, it may be consciously. If you enter with the spiritual eye blindfolded, you will not indeed be wholly disappointed of your oracle; but, in receiving it and taking it away, you will suppose yourself alone: you will keep it as a precept of wisdom, and approve it as you might a proverb of Solomon's, and, in commending it to others, will look out for logic to support it. But the very soul of it will escape you, because it is one term of a personal relation, of which the other remains hidden from you. If, on the other hand, you have discovered on what holy ground you stand, you will issue forth in quite another mood: you will have, not a proposition to prove, but a message to deliver; and, fresh from the communion with the Infinite Inspirer, you will speak "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."

The moment the experiences of Conscience are recognized as a personal relation, the whole body of Morals starts up as in life from the dead, and becomes transfigured with light flashing from the contact of two worlds.

In height, in depth, in volume, in sanctity, in tenderness, they are hardly less changed than the mortal putting on his immortality. Take only the following particulars.

1. The *Authority* of Duty becomes transcendent and Divine; and we understand how it is that it always gazed at us with so awful and quickening an eye, as if to fix our look, and still to pursue us though we turned away. This is intelligible, if it be the meeting of spirit with spirit, the living touch of infinite holiness on finite temptation. But no absent power, no code of the past, no heaven or hell of the future, could draw from us such secret homage: where and when the worship is, there and then is the God. If previously it was the tendency of moral conviction to harden our independence of will and impart a Stoical rigor, this temper, which belongs only to our standing before men or Fate, must now give way, and be replaced by pure reverence and self-surrender, not to resistless Force, but to Highest Righteousness.

2. The *Scope* of Duty becomes for the first time co-extensive with the area of the Will. There is a considerable range of voluntary life for every one, where all his fellows are out of reach, or at least so faintly and remotely affected by what he feels and does, as to obtain no voice in it. This field of private thought, of individual habit, of lonely taste and occupation, it has always been difficult to reclaim from the anarchy of chance desires, or the forbidding enclosure of selfishness, and annex it to the domain of Duty. To effect this, recourse has been had to such empty fictions as that of "Duty to ourselves;" which can be saved from contradiction only by an impossibility, viz. the splitting of "ourselves" into two agents susceptible of reciprocal obligations. The moment you fix any real sense upon the phrase, its meaning becomes simply *Prudence*, the neglect of which may constitute a solitary man a fool, but not a criminal. All this is changed in a

moment on finding that we are never alone and deserted by personal relations; that when finite agents leave us, the Infinite remains; that in every consciousness of a better and a worse, his living Perfection is in converse with us, and, stripping us of arbitrary option, imparts to our selection a character of faithfulness or guilt. There is nothing, in short, to which this one transcendent personal relation does not penetrate. The whole order of the life and mind, even in the deepest solitude, feels its supervision. And matters of which even good men are apt to be heedless, e. g. the limits of time and degree within which permissible desires and pursuits, — of wealth, of society, of ease and ornament, of knowledge and accomplishment, — may rightly have their way, are no longer left unregulated. A sacred light is interfused with our being from centre to circumference, and, where human affections cease to direct our path, gleams through the air and leads us on.

3. The *Volume*, or internal capacity, of the Moral Life is immeasurably expanded by gaining its religious interpretation. If it be the theme of converse between the Divine and the human mind and the expression of their affinity, our faith in Righteousness bursts the bounds of anthropology and assumes a cosmical extension. No escape from terrestrial conditions supersedes it: no withdrawal of limits from the mind would render it obsolete: for here it is, present at once in its two extremes, — at its beginning and in its consummation, born in the finite nature from the communion of the Infinite; inexhaustible, therefore, through the gradations of approach from the one to the other. And however surprising this may seem so long as moral excellence is looked at only in the concrete form of its external offices, it becomes intelligible when we follow up character to its interior essence, and find its perfection to consist in a certain order and har-

mony among the spiritual springs of action. However long a mind may live, however large its powers may grow, this harmony, this ascendency of the best, may become more nearly perfect, or in its perfection, if that be possible, cover a wider field. The conscience carries in its very nature a secret suspicion of this measureless possibility of goodness, and feels the presence of the vision even through its grievous blindness: hence, in uncorrupted natures, its undying humility, its inextinguishable aspiration. The moral sense, neglected and abused, may no doubt sink away, and on its lower line of movement die out in the dark; but, exercising its normal function on the upper line, it touches no terminus and dreams of none. Its intensest speed it deems intolerably slow: if it have feet, it longs for wings: if it have wings, it envies the lightning: it has always spaces to traverse which it cannot overtake. This ideal infinitude of excellence for our mind is but the reflex of its real infinitude for the Supreme Mind.

4. The *Enthusiasm* of the Moral Life is intensified by the consciousness of its Divine Source. That it is the meeting-ground of kindred sympathy between our nature and God's, where he lets us into the confidences of his thought and the partnership of his causality, is in itself enough to glorify the human characteristics and to endear the Divine, and kindle the zeal for bringing them into harmony. But, over and above this general tendency, there is a provision, in the inward constitution of our conscience, which gives a special impulse in the same direction. It sees the springs of action in a certain order of rank in excellence, — an order that speaks the preferences of God. And among the terms at the summit of that scale are Compassion, Sympathy, Wonder (devotion to truth), and Reverence (devotion to goodness); in short, the group (name the members as you will) of disinterested

and spiritual affections whence all fruitful inspiration has ever burst upon the world. These, then, are the fountains of life most dear to the Soul of souls: and those are most like him whose energies, detained by no inner frosts, flow freely forth in streams of Love that nourish the roots of every human good. The Ethical spirit is often supposed to be cold and scrupulous and negatively correct, shrinking from innumerable things and worshipping nothing. In its period of critical legalism, prior to its new birth, it may be so; but once sweetened with the waters of regeneration and initiated into its Divine relations, it breathes the air of quite another world; discovers that the best vigilance against evil is to fling yourself away into some humane and purifying good; and, since the life of God is the life of love, gains assurance that, with an infinite ally, the battle of righteousness can never lose hope and heart. The grievous features of the human lot which, in the natural stage, produce only dejection, become, in the spiritual, an impelling power. The sadness of the actual to so many sufferers, when touched by faith in their latent possibilities, lets in a kindling air, and turns the mournful smoke into a living flame. And the inequalities of men, which once seemed to be stereotyped by nature in caste, in serfdom, in slavery, and to close the door upon the future, no sooner catch the transforming light of the common human responsibility, than they wake the justice of converted souls, and shame the former pride and scorn, and raise vast armies of compassion intent on rescue, and penetrate life with mutual respect.

Such, then, I take to be the connection betwen Ethics and Religion; the latter, as containing the Supreme Personal Relation, completing the former, and, in doing so, transfiguring it throughout. The attempt of our own age to separate the two, and prove that it makes no difference to Morals what theory we adopt, or whether any at all,

respecting the universe beyond our own nature, is full of pathetic interest, as expressing an anxious resolve, amid the disintegration of other faiths, to save at least the minimum of conditions for our orderly life with one another. But, intellectually, this excellent motive does not excuse so great a paradox. It is simply impossible to be indifferent to the kind of Power which presides over the system of things; and the choice practically lies between two conceptions, — Necessity and Will, — the one blind, the other with moral ends. Whichever you adopt carries with it a train of consequences direct into the sphere of our experience.

Blind Necessity on the throne of the Universe means submission without law (for "Necessity has no law"); internecine war through the whole field of life; equilibrium, attained on the line of least resistance; society, suspended upon a truce; every nation, a camp; every individual, a sentinel against rivals; the strong, hunting the weak and laughing their saviours to scorn; history, reduced to a perpetual "massacre of the innocents;" and morals, to a persistent getting what you can and doing what you must.

Righteousness on the throne of the Universe means the subordination of might to right; concord, composed out of the varieties of life; equilibrium, effected by concurrent attractions; society, resting on the common recognition of a binding law; every nation, a province of the "kingdom of God;" every individual, a member of a "Sacred band;" the strong, bearing the burdens of the weak, and the weak holding on to the rear of the strong; history, an "Education of the human race;" and morals, the Divine ideal which that education is to work out.

I do not deny that each of these theories may cite phenomena that seem to countenance it; but I affirm that the characteristic phenomena of the Moral world are compati-

ble only with the second, and must be dismissed as illusions before it can be dislodged. Is any one to be listened to who says that this would make no difference?

Religion can as little afford to forget its emergence from the Conscience, as the Conscience to shrink from its religious transfiguration. The essence of Religion lies in communion between the finite and the Infinite Mind, between the individual Soul and the Universal. Where this communion is based specifically on the Ethical consciousness, it is a felt relation between Will and Will, a harmony or discord between Spirit and Spirit, in which two free Causalities are in presence of each other, in the light or under the cloud. Here, the human Personality asserts itself in the very moment and by the very act of surrender and abnegation, and never rises into higher liberty than when sinking into identification with the supreme intent. But if you quit this unique ground of *Moral* experience, and for any other side of your nature throw open the windows to the Infinite, the overwhelming inrush of the Primary Causality will utterly drown the secondary, abolish the conditions of personality, and dissolve all detached existence in the deified cloud with which the Mystic fills all space. The imagination, brooding on the fixed idea that "the All is only One," sees the lines of difference melt away, and accepts all states, outward and inward, as equally Divine; treats all moral distinctions as wiped out from the nature of things; and all objects alike, conscious or unconscious, as passive vehicles of the same necessitating Power. I will not urge that Religion, being the communion between two, commits suicide when, by merging one, it passes into a speculative Monism. But I dwell simply on the fact of the utter denudation, by these floods of Divine Necessity, of the whole ground on which Ethics stood: so that, if Religion can be said to remain, it cannot be a religion of

Duty. It is true that the Mystic, in losing *himself*, is freed from a copious source of human sins. But it is a negative deliverance, even if it lasts beyond his meditative moments; and it secures nothing better to take the place. According as his nature tends to thought, to affection, to art, he will dissolve himself away in speculation, in love, or in beauty, without a regulative order for his personal relations, or capacity for concrete action. These precarious drifts of emotion involve great danger to character. No greater gift do we owe to Christianity than the conception and consecration of *Personality:* and every influence that confuses and disturbs it softens the very nerve of modern civilization.

[No. 67]

THE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

OF

CHILDREN.

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

There is one curious superstition concerning the matter of religious training that it seems to me important that I should notice. I meet it at almost every turn. It is one of the finger-marks of a crude, undeveloped, and unthinking liberalism. Parents tell me continually that they do not give their children any religious training, from the feeling that it is taking an unfair advantage of the child. They say, I propose to let my children grow up as far as possible unbiased. When they become of age, capable of thinking for themselves, then let them look over the world and choose what religion they will have, what their belief as to these great questions shall be. Now this might be all very wise and well, provided, in the nature of the case, it were not utterly impossible. Can you take one of your children and isolate him from all the rest of the world, and let him grow up till he is twenty years of age with no thought concerning God, concerning duty, concerning right or wrong, or worship or aspiration, with no thought concerning a future, and then can you suddenly place before him all the facts, the dreams, the imaginations, the hopes, the fears, of humanity in all the ages, and have him so situated and so constituted that he shall look over the whole field freely, without any prejudice, and choose that which is the best? If you should take a ball of putty, white and smooth and clean, and shape it as you wished, and then toss it from hand to hand, or let it fall

into the dust or mire of the street, and let any passer-by step on it or shape it as he would, and then at the end of a certain time suddenly endow it with life, and ask it to choose what shape it would hold, and whether it would be soiled or clean, you would be engaged in a rational operation as compared with this one of which I am speaking. Suppose a sculptor should take a piece of marble and stand it in front of his studio on the sidewalk, and should invite every passer-by to have a stroke at it with mallet and chisel, shaping it according to the fancy or the caprice of the moment, and then at the end of the year have it suddenly endowed with life, and ask it to choose what it would be, — the shape of a god or of a satyr, of beauty or ugliness, pure and white or stained and soiled, — this man would be rational as compared with the one who believes that you can let a child grow up until he is twenty unbiased, without absorbing any religious ideas or convictions, and then freely choose what he will be. If *you* do not bias the child, the first that he meets on the street, or in his school, or among his companions, will begin the work of biasing, of impression, of education, of training; for this is a continuous process. Whether you will or not, it is something over which you have no choice. It is something that will be done either wisely and well, or unwisely and ill.

These persons forget another thing, — that the child is born with the summed-up and inherited results of the tendencies of all the past. This brain, this heart, these bodies of ours, are not clean white pieces of paper, that the grown child can write on what he will. We are all palimpsests, that have been written on over and over and over again in all the ages of the past. We are the total result of thousands of generations, and we come to the beginning of this life with tendencies and biases and inclinations of every kind. It seems to me, then, that if you have any views, any convictions, any persuasions, as to right and wrong,

as to God, as to human character, as to destiny, that you think are worth holding, you should do your utmost to give these to your children. If you have none, of course I shall waste my words in talking to you, unless I can persuade you of the importance of becoming possessed of some as soon as possible. If you are doubtful about any of these convictions, then seek to remove these doubts. Seek to find out the truth, and remember that anything that is safe for you to hold is safe for your child to know. I am amazed, as I come in contact with parents, to find that they hold certain religious convictions themselves, and yet question the wisdom of telling them to their children. I would as soon teach my children false arithmetic, or false geography, or false astronomy, or false grammar, as teach them what I regard as false in religion. Teach your child the best, the noblest, the truest that you know, — the convictions of your own heart. Do not, of course, attempt to forestall natural growth and the unfolding of the childish mind, or force on it things that it is not able to comprehend. It has been my method always to be utterly frank with my children. I have never taught them what I did not believe myself. If they asked me if I believed a certain thing, and I did not, I said so frankly, as I would concerning anything else. If you wish to teach your children practical infidelity, to distrust you and to doubt the reality of your religious convictions, you can do it in no speedier way than by playing fast and loose with your child's first earnest, honest questionings concerning religious truth.

When is a child religiously educated? Let me try to outline what I mean by a child being religiously educated or trained.

I believe most thoroughly in a certain type of theology, certain views and conceptions of the world, certain methods of worship. I believe that it can be historically

demonstrated that certain methods, certain ways of thinking, certain conceptions of God and man and destiny, have played their part in helping on the world, and that certain others have hindered the development and progress of mankind; and yet, as earnestly as I believe all this, I do not think that this theological training is of the chiefest importance.

First, I believe that every child ought to be trained to think, and to feel, and to become conscious of the fact, that he is vitally related to God. This world is thrilling, pulsing, throbbing, with divine life, divine power, divine meaning; and more and more, as I grow older and think, I trust, more deeply, more and more do I see God everywhere. I look upon the stars shining, but I cannot stop with the star. It is the life, the power, the mystery, the wonder of God, that looks down at me from the night sky. I look upon the majesty of the ocean. It is not merely the movement of certain drops of water, or collections of drops, that I see. This rhythmical motion, this majesty, this mystery, this moaning, laughing sea, is just one outshining of the infinite and eternal life of God. I look into human history. I do not regard it any longer simply as an aimless struggle and conflict of political forces, ambitions, hopes, and fears of these or those men, or this or that ruler, or this or that king. It is the power, the life, the breath of God, that I see and feel everywhere, — humanity uplifted and led on by the inspiration of this power. And so, when I look into a human face, — the face of a friend or a loved one, — I do not stop with the eyes, with the brain, with the soul, of that friend. All this friendship, all this tenderness, all this beauty, all this love, are simply utterances, words, outshinings of the divine. And so I would have every child taught, first, to believe that he stands ever, in the light or in the dark, in pleasure or in pain, in business reverses or successes, in

hope or in fear, in struggle with right and wrong, in the immediate presence of God, — that he is dealing first hand with God. There is is no power but of God. There is no explaining any phase or form of this universal life, if he be left out.

Then I would have the child taught that in the law of this God, as manifested, no matter how, no matter where, is the law of his life; that he is not free in the sense of being at liberty to do according as he wills; that he is free only to know and to obey. I would have every child's conscience thus trained in the light of this one great, overmastering conviction.

Then I would have the heart touched. I believe that it is one of the most important things in the world that the child's sensitive nature should be roused so as to respond in love and tenderness and worship; that he should feel the motive force of love and of life, so that he should not only see what ought to be done, but be moved, *impelled*, to do it, and to feel that in this movement, these impulses, he is being played upon by the very hand of God himself.

I would have the sense of worship trained, so that every child, as he looks upon the mystery, the wonder, the glory, the beauty, of the world, should have his thoughts, his heart, his feeling, reach up to kneel, as it were, at the very foot of the throne which is the spring and source of all the wonder and glory that call out the admiration of the soul. This is what I mean by religious education, religious training.

You will see that this is something else than teaching the head merely, than learning of the discussions that constitute the theological controversies of the world; something else than being merely convinced that "my church" is the best in the world; something else than learning what is called sacred history, or sacred biography, or sacred geography. It is bringing into life, into active movement,

the real religious nature of the man, so that it shall be the mainspring and motive power of noble thought and feeling and living. This is first. Under whatever religious name, under the inspiration of whatever sacred literature, under the guidance of whatever religious teacher, under whatever theology, in whatever church, or in no church, if the religious nature be alive and the man live in close relation to God, this is the first great thing to be attained.

Now let me say a few personal words concerning the theatre of this kind of religious training. Where does the child get it as a matter of fact? We organize a Sunday-school; but what is that, — an hour a week for the children who attend regularly during forty weeks of the year? Where are the children the rest of the time, and what are the influences playing round them to develop or crush out their religious life? The larger part of the religious education of every child is that which he receives unconsciously, and which is perhaps bestowed unconsciously. How is it about our homes, and the religious influences there? What can we hope to do with our children one hour a week, if all the influences during the rest of the week are either indifferent or adverse? Then as regards this matter of home training. You know that sometimes a plant that you may try to care for in your home will wither and die. It is the atmosphere that kills it, or it lacks the proper soil. All your love and solicitude are in vain: it merely will not grow. There are certain types of plants that will live under the edge of the glacier among the Alps. Put them in the tropics, and they will wither and die. So there are tropical plants which, if you take from their soft, warm, moist beds and sunny skies, and place on the mountain side, will cease to be. It is a matter of situation, of atmosphere. The atmosphere must be favorable to the development of the religious nature in a child. It is of more importance than any direct influence that we can

bring to bear on his nature. Take a child in a home where all the influence and atmosphere are what we may call — what Jesus called — worldly. Worldly, as Jesus used that word, meant simply the conventional life, dealing with external affairs instead of caring for the deepest and highest spiritual things. Suppose a child is made to feel, if a caller comes in, that the particular thing to be thought of about that caller is the way she happens to be dressed. That is the thing which is emphasized after the caller has gone. Or the discussion turns, perhaps, on the street that this person lives in, the kind of house she has, how much money she may possess, — these are made the prominent things in discussing her. This cannot fail to give the child the impression that external matters are really the great things of this world. How many parents make this impression on their young minds quite thoughtlessly! They do not believe so themselves, or they would not admit it; but these are the impressions that the child's mind receives week by week and year by year. The character, the culture, the tenderness of this caller, her benevolence, her willingness to help, — these things, if the parents were asked, they would say were greater; but the impression that is made is that they are not of chief importance. The atmosphere of the home is not in sympathy with religious development: it is irreligious. Then the books the children read, the companions with whom they are associated, things that touch the child morning, noon, and night, every day in the week, and every week in the year, color, shape, control, his life. These are the things that are making or marring his religious development more than the direct efforts to counteract them that can be made by the Sunday-school teacher or than can be made by the parents themselves. For, curious as the contradiction is, there are large numbers of parents who instruct their children, so far as words go, in one way, and *impress* them, so

far as their influence and life go, another way. Their precepts are right; the atmosphere with which they surround the child is wrong.

Let us turn for one moment to the matter of church attendance. I am always glad when I see children at church; and I am sorry that so few children attend Unitarian churches, or any churches, perhaps. The Sunday-school is usurping the place of the church to such an extent that it is thought not proper to take the children to church. I wish every single child in this parish might be in church every Sunday morning. Suppose they do go to sleep: who cares? I believe that the influence of this habit of being in church — of feeling that they are a part of it, of feeling that it is expected of them that they will come — is more important than anything else that you can give in the way of religious training. If the church is not worth your attending, if it does not stand for your highest ideal of religious thought and religious labor, then I would not have the children go, and I would not go myself. But if it is the best realization of your religious ideal that you can practically attain, then I believe that there is nothing finer for the children than that they should grow up to feel that they are a part of it. If I could have my way, and it came to be a matter of choice between the Sunday-school and the church, I would abolish the Sunday-school. But that is not practical. The children expect the Sunday-school; they wish for it. If we do not organize one that will teach them the things that we believe, they will attend one where they will be taught things that we do not believe, and in ways which we do not believe. But I do think that it is a calamity when children are taught that the Sunday-school is theirs, and that the church is not. What is the result of it? In large numbers of cases, when they have outgrown the Sunday-school, as they think, and have cultivated no taste for the church, they are all abroad,

having no religious tastes, no religious ideals, no religious passion, no religious devotion. It is not necessary, as I have tried to make plain, that the child should have clear intellectual conceptions as to what is going on in the church. It is the atmosphere, the impression, the habit. How large a part of success in life, in every direction, is this matter of habit! You take a boy into your business, and he is not worth anything for one or two years. He must be moulded and shaped to the business. Every faculty must become habituated to it, so that he shall know it in every direction, and do right because it is second nature. Then he becomes valuable to you. If a person wishes to learn the piano, years are spent in training the fingers, until they are habituated to the action of the keys. So in every department. The matter of habit is just as necessary in the religious development of the child. If a child should go to church every Sunday after it is no longer an annoyance to its parents or those around it, and should sleep every Sunday for the first five or seven years, and then only gradually wake up, get a snatch of a sentence, and wonder what it meant; hear a name, a word, that starts a train of thought; listen to a strain of music, and be lifted by it and sent off into a dream of what the high things of the spirit might stand for; note an air of reverence, of consecration, and feel that these people are here for something, because they believe in something, because they stand for something, because they wish to achieve something for humanity; get a sense of that *esprit de corps* to be found in every earnest congregation, — I believe that just these things would be of unspeakable importance in the religious development and culture of that child.

Then, as to the Sunday-school, since it exists, we must make the best of it. But when I appeal to people to help it by becoming teachers, they do not know enough, they

are not good enough, they have not time enough. Who does know enough? Who is good enough? Who has any spare time? How is the work to be done, then? If nobody is to do it, it will not be done. If one is to do it, why then one more than another? If you are not willing to help train your own children, what claim have you on the work and devotion of somebody else? It is not an uncommon thing for parents who might help in the Sunday-school, but do not, to find a great deal of fault with those that come and do the best they can. This seems hardly equal or fair. Let us all take hold of this work, and do the best we can. And let every one feel that it is not a matter of inclination or whim, but that there is an earnest duty connected with it. And remember that I do not want anybody for a teacher in my Sunday-school who thinks he is very wise. I certainly do not want anybody who is possessed with the idea that he is very good, and I really do not want anybody who has nothing else to do. I want just human people, loving, tender, devoted people, who appreciate that here is something that is worth their doing, and are willing to do the best they can. I do not care so much whether you teach theology, or how much religious history and biography you teach, or whether you are up concerning the missionary journeys of St. Paul, and are able to talk about them very intelligently. These are matters of interest and importance: but the principal thing, after all, is that you should bring the children with whom you come in contact close to a warm heart, that you should surround them with an atmosphere of devotion. Teach them a sense of duty; make them feel that life is noble, true, holy, high; that there is something grand to live for; and that they may become a part of this great effort of humanity to lift up the world.

This matter of religious education, then, is just this: it is believing in God; it is loving and reverencing all

truth, all sacrifice, all noble action; it is devotion to that which is best; it has power in it to dignify and redeem human life. If I had my choice whether my boy should become rich, successful as a politician or a statesman, a leader in society, a leader in the law, or distinguished as a scientist, an artist, or a musician, and be, not in a bad sense, but in the common sense, irreligious, or whether his whole religious nature should be properly trained, kindled into life, made active, supreme, controlling, I would choose this religious development above everything else. For it means duty, it means love, it means trust, it means peace, it means hope, it means linking the life with God, so that one shall feel that he is a part of the great movement of the divine life through the ages. It means redemption from everything selfish, petty, mean, small. It means that we shall be at last one note in that song of universal triumph that shall signalize the deliverance of mankind from all sorrow and all wrong.

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[No. 68]

GOD.

BY

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GOD.

The fulness of Him that filleth all in all. — Eph. i. 23.

A magnificent, an overwhelming conception, — God filling all things up with himself so that there is no room for anything else! God, who is all in all; God, in whom all atoms, worlds, and beings live and move; God, in whom all space, power, beauty, wisdom, justice, thought, love, and life exist for ever and ever; God, in whom man lives; God, whose space and force surround, interpenetrate, and include the body of man, whose thought and wisdom enlighten the mind of man, whose justice gives law to the conscience of man, whose love rejoices the heart of man, and whose life surrounds, interpenetrates, and includes the life of man, — God is the transcendent theme of our meditation to-day.

The theme being so vast, it will be wise for us to deal with it in detail, — in fragments, so to speak. Let us, then, take up one by one the attributes of God. Seeing only one side of God at a time, as it were, we shall be sheltered, as Moses was, by cleft of rock and shadow of hand from the full blaze of the ineffable glory.

Let us then say, first of all, that, since God is all in all — that is, is strictly infinite, — all the attributes of God are infinite. Each attribute is coextensive with every other attribute. Where any one attribute exists, there every other attribute coexists with it. Where space exists, there power, thought, wisdom, beauty, truth, justice, love, exist; for all these are attributes of God, modes of the being of God.

I. The space of God is infinite, and is coextensive with all the attributes of God. Spinoza, the father of modern Scientific Philosophy, was, as Schleiermacher lovingly called him, "a God-intoxicated man." He saw all things in God. And yet all that most men know, or rather misknow, about him is that he granted just two attributes to God, — extension and thought. Granted? Why, the man lived in God; to him God was all in all. What he did say was this: "God, being infinite, lives in infinite modes; and two of these modes are extension and thought." Out of the infinite number of modes he selected these two, simply because they are not only so closely related to man's own existence, experience, and thought, but also because on these two modes, as foundation, he builds his scheme of the universe.

The mind demands the origin of the visible universe; that is, demands something for that universe to rise out of. But the mind also demands that that something shall itself be unoriginated, as otherwise thought would find no resting-place. Two postulates will forever be essential to any system of thought: 1. Unoriginated Substance; 2. Unoriginated Space. On these as basis the whole universe can be constructed. If with Spinoza we consider space an essential attribute of substance, then Unoriginated Infinite Substance is the one all-sufficient postulate, which being granted, the origin of the visible universe is only a question of detail.

Our one postulate, then, is Unoriginated Infinite Substance; in other words, our one postulate is God. This mighty postulate once granted, all things, beings, worlds, are modes of motion of his Spirit. The material universe is fated or uniform motion; the spiritual universe is free or independent motion. In God alone do all things find their true substance.

There are other good reasons why, in our analysis of the attributes of God, we should begin, as Spinoza did,

with space. Space is the first attribute of God of which the infant mind becomes conscious. Indeed, we may say it is the one attribute of God of which all organisms are more or less conscious. The reason why the commonest minds know something about space is that they have a vast organic inheritance of space-perceptions behind them. Other organisms have labored, and they have entered into their labors. It is well, therefore, to begin where experience begins.

There are, however, difficulties on the threshold of our examination, which could completely block the way if they were not got rid of. The first class is the besetment of ordinary minds. There is an absurd notion floating about that space somehow exists of itself, independently of any being whatever. God, therefore, I suppose, in the far past found space conveniently lying round, and wisely made use of it for creative purposes. There must therefore be two independent existences, — God and space; for there would be no room for creation if space did not kindly lend itself to his design. Or, perhaps, the two high contracting parties agreed on equal terms, one to create and the other to find room for creation.

The mere verbal statement of the logical outcome of these vague notions is enough to show their absurdity.

The other class of difficulties besets more thoughtful minds. When a clever man has thought himself into a fog about space, he is apt to imagine himself quite a metaphysician, especially if he can repeat some perfectly unintelligible formula about space.

To quote a familiar unintelligibility, "Space is a form of thought." Now, thought is a mode of motion. Human thought is a mode of motion of the human brain, corresponding to and accompanying a motion of the human spirit. But motion is not a thing; it is a state of a thing. The motion of a snowflake is not the snowflake; it is a state of a snowflake. Therefore the expression, "Space

is a form of thought," is equivalent to this other, "Space is a state of the human brain." If, then, you really mean that space is a state of the small human brain, whose space-filling cavity is only a few cubic inches, this is not simply absurdity; it is delirium.

If, however, you say, "Space is the form of thought," — meaning by the form the mould in which all thought is, of necessity, cast, — you have stated a great truth, no longer a piece of metaphysical moonshine.

If, again, you say, "Space is a form of the thought of God," this is no longer an absurdity; it is only a confusing of two coexistent, infinite attributes of God, — extension and thought. God's thought, being infinite, is coextensive with God's space.

So much for these two classes of difficulty. There are signs abroad that they are both steadily diminishing. Ordinary minds are being educated into an awestruck sense of the immensity of space; and thoughtful minds are becoming weary of the endless treadmill of bad definition, mounted upon which a man can keep on walking upward forever, without rising a single inch.

I had gone thus far when I was summoned from my desk by a friendly visit from a book-agent. Silver and gold had I none, but what I had I gave. I showed him a grand sun-spot in the telescope. He was evidently deeply impressed, and suddenly burst forth with this: "The one thing that overawes and overwhelms me is the infinity of space! I can't take it in!" When a book-agent is overawed, it is a note of advance all along the line.

But to proceed. Space is the necessary substratum upon which, as foundation, all things stand. As all motion is performed in time, so all existence takes place in space.

Here it is essential to sweep away at once the ten thousand illusions which beset thoughtful minds when they first begin to think about space. We constantly hear such

expressions as these: "Thought requires no space;" "Feelings have no space-relations." The act of thought or emotion, we are told, is purely spiritual, — meaning by "spiritual" something that has no space-relations at all. Now, no entity exists that has no space-relations; each and every part of every being is always and everywhere related to space.

Thought in the human body is a wave vibration; and a wave vibration must be of something, and not nothing. No matter whether of brain and nerve, or of something ineffably finer, which corresponds to an archangel's thought as these do to man's thought, — always and everywhere thought will be a particular state of a being who is wholly immersed in space-relations.

Christianity has always believed in the spiritual body, — that is, in the continuance of natural and intelligible space-relations in the life beyond death. If, however, we take for granted the possibility of purely bodiless finite spirit, that purely bodiless spirit will be as completely immersed in space as rock, plant, animal, or man, — will have as perfect space-relations with the All and with each finite thing as if it were a ball of iron. As an example of moonshiny thinking, I take an instance from a really fine modern thinker. "We might as well talk," he says, "of pure spirit being white or black or green as speak of it being either here or there." This is simply idealism gone mad; and it is not too much to say that no scientific metaphysics will ever be possible to minds that have not got rid of these prescientific notions.

In the deepest sense, then, we may say that Space is The All, including within itself all forms of being, all matter, all spirit, and all manifestations of both matter and spirit; and Space, to all alike, is that underlying reality without which none of them would be conceivable.

To the archangel — that is, to the fully developed man — Space is the Presence of God, the fulness of Him that

filleth all in all, in whose fulness are included all power, all beauty, all intelligence, all truth, all tenderness.

This stupendous thought — the greatest that a finite mind can grasp — is just dawning on the mind of man. He has begun to behold the rising light who sees that there is no such thing as empty space. From this he can proceed to construct his universe.

The child first learns that the earth is a sphere eight thousand miles thick. The man all his life long is busied in filling up this conception, until at last each inch of that sphere is seen to be full of power and wonder and beauty. Oceans and continents, mountains and valleys, tropic splendors and icy poles, forests of a thousand woods, flowers of myriad hues, marts and cities and homes of men, steamships ploughing the mighty deep, trains rushing across the continents, wires flashing their electric message, — all the inconceivable variety of human life, — all this he sees on its surface alone; while, beneath his feet, his thought penetrates below the roots of the mountains to that hidden ocean of living fire which eye of man shall never see.

Just so the first lesson for man as a child to learn is that space is infinite; that he can send his thought onward for ever and ever in every direction, and still find himself in the very centre of things. Developed man is to fill up this skeleton conception with all worlds and beings that are, — with galaxy after galaxy filled with light and life; with destinies innumerable in trillions and trillions of planetary homes; with power, justice, wisdom, truth, and love vindicating themselves everywhere, in everything; while through all, above all, around all, and in all shine the light, life, and glory of the One Eternal, in whom are all things and by whom all things consist.

II. The power of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space and with all the other attributes of God.

All space is powerful space. There is no such thing as a power-vacuum. Empty space is an empty phrase.

There is no cubic inch of empty space in the whole universe. Take a cubic inch of space midway between the sun and Sirius. Through that cubic inch the light and heat of Sirius pass. Let us analyze the beam by the spectroscope, and see what this means. Beginning at the ultra-red end of the spectrum, let us start with the invisible heat-waves. The longest of these we may call $\frac{1}{30,000}$ of an inch in length, — that is, our cubic inch will contain 30,000 such waves. Omitting all delicate gradations of half-waves, quarter-waves, and so on, we will consider the next group to be those waves of which there are 30,001 to the inch, and the next 30,002, and so on. Each group of waves is present in the cubic inch at the self-same instant, and each passes through without the least interference from the other. When we arrive at 40,000 to the inch, we are well inside the visible red; and we must keep adding 40,001, 40,002, etc., to our series of waves. At 50,000 to the inch we are in the centre of the visible spectrum, and keep on adding, remembering all the while that the yellow and green waves are wholly independent of the red. At 60,000 to the inch we are in the violet, and keep on adding as before. At 70,000, 80,000, 90,000, 100,000, we obtain wave-lengths in the ultra-violet, invisible chemical waves, each group being completely present in the cubic inch, and each being absolutely independent of all the rest. At last we have obtained a fair notion of the number of waves which are present in our cubic inch at the self-same instant from Sirius alone; that is, if we consider Sirius to be a simple tiny point of flame instead of being a mighty globe millions of miles in diameter, each square inch of whose surface sends forth a series of such waves. At the same instant there is present in the cubic inch a similar series of waves from every square inch of Arcturus, each wave of which does not interfere in the slightest degree with the waves of Sirius; also from Vega, Canopus, Regulus, and

the six thousand stars visible to the naked eye, and the twenty million stars visible in a great telescope. Also from the innumerable planets, whose faint light no telescope is fine enough to catch, a series equal in number to those of Sirius is present at the same instant in that same cubic inch. But how long is that instant? As light travels 190,000 miles in a second, this inconceivable series is changed into an entirely new series twelve billion times a second. Space is empty! But this is only one set of space-relations. Through that inch the gravitating relations of Sirius with the whole universe in a straight line beyond that inch pass; and you must prolong that gravitating line to infinity for Sirius alone. Then a similar line for Arcturus, Vega, and the twenty millions of suns in our galaxy, and the billion planets, and the uncounted nebulæ, and the infinite number of atoms of star-dust. Through that inch all this passes simultaneously; and at every instant a different line is drawn, as each of these trillions of objects moves on its destined course. Each change in a star quintillions of miles away is instantly, without any time interval whatever, reported in that inch, so that the movement of the whole universe incessantly registers itself inside that inch. If an archangel, after millions of years of study, could thoroughly know what goes on in that inch, we might say that he knew the universe.

The exactness of God is in that inch. Not a single one of this infinite number of results registers itself there wrongly, either as to quality or quantity.

The economy of God is in that inch, — not one vibration lost; not a single wave that does not produce its full effect; not an ounce of gravitation wasted.

The beauty of God registers itself in that inch. Apply, in imagination, a microscope magnifying trillions of diameters to that inch. Imagine each light-wave illumined, each with its appropriate color; each mingling with every other, with infinite perfection of shape and curve; each

running through each, without displacement, confusion, injury, or loss; and if the watching of sunlight or moonlight in its play upon the countless waves of lake or ocean be indescribably beautiful, what would such a sight as this be? The beauty of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space.

The love of God is in that inch. To whose eyes do these light-waves bring messages of cheer? To whose heart does day utter speech? To whose mind doth night show knowledge? Who inhabit the worlds that gravitation holds together? In a word, for whose sake is all this done? Out of the infinite number of acts of power that pass through that inch (and in that inch we may well say that the whole universe registers itself at each moment), not a single one can be detected which is for the benefit or advantage of God. All, without exception, are acts of bounty to his finite children. The love of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space. The devout mediæval man knelt in awestruck ecstasy before the throne of God. Around that throne the archangels stood, rank above rank. Around that throne wheeled the host of suns and stars. From thence, through the realms of space, flew thick and fast the arrows of his will. From thence he ordered all things in heaven and earth; and yet not Saint Bernard himself, in highest rapture of devotion, could conceive, as sitting on that throne, as much power, wisdom, beauty, and benignity as dwells in one single inch of space.

III. The exactness of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space and all the other attributes of God.

The Archangel Mathesis forever stands at the right hand of the throne of God. She claims it, not simply as her right, but as her duty, to calculate all of his wondrous ways that are calculable. Reverently, with folded wings, but firmly, standing on her feet, and looking with undazzled eye into the very blaze of the everlasting glory, on tablets of steel, with pen of adamant, she forecasts the

results of the exactness of God. She claims as her own every motion, thrill, and throb of every atom of matter in the universe. She foretells the fated course of the stars. She predicts the result of every heave of the mighty forces imprisoned in the bosoms of all worlds. No quiver of a leaf, no sparkle of a wave, no gleam of color in the tiniest flower, no throb of sunlight, moonlight, starlight, escapes her. Every bone, muscle, nerve, blood corpuscle, every hair-tip, every invisible molecular change in every plant and animal, pays tribute to her. No blush of a maiden's cheek, no thought in a sage's brain, no thrill of inspiration in a prophet's heart, no ecstasy of worship in the rapt saint's inmost soul, can claim complete exemption from her all-pervading scrutiny. She calculates the power of every heart-beat, the exact amount of tissue used up in each single thought, and knows that no life-change, however sublime it be, can ever go on without her. The whole realm of fate is her province; and fate, she knows, is the adamantine base on which all finite freedom must be built. And to man she saith, "Thy wisdom is to know this: on this stone build the house of thy life; for if it fall upon thee, it will grind thee to powder."

IV. The economy of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space and with all the other attributes of God.

The science of the last hundred years is one long comment on this mighty text. The eighteenth century discovered that matter cannot be destroyed. The nineteenth century has discovered that force cannot be destroyed. The twentieth will discover that mind cannot be destroyed. No single atom of matter in all the starry spaces was ever lost; nay, no atom has ever lost a trillionth part of its potency. No unit of force was ever lost. Unbroken, undiminished, it keeps acting on the universe for ever and ever. In all the starry spaces no mind was ever lost; it keeps living on in the midst of God for ever and ever. To-day we believe, to-morrow we shall know, —

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

Emerson said that it must be possible to make such a statement of religion as would make all scepticism ridiculous. We are fast arriving at this. Certainly, we are already able to make a statement concerning infinite space that makes all scepticism about infinite space ridiculous. The proof that power is coextensive with space makes all scepticism about infinite power ridiculous. A similar statement concerning that infinite exactness and economy which are coextensive with space is becoming part of mathematics. Very soon we shall have a statement of infinite beauty, justice, and love which will equally make all scepticism about them also ridiculous.

In the mean time never call a man an atheist who believes in and is greatened by one single attribute of God, who is awestruck with the immensity of space or ravished with the perception of infinite beauty. It is a great thing even to believe that power is, and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek it.

V. The justice of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space and all the other attributes of God.

Michael, the archangel of justice, standing at the right hand of God, with the balances in his left hand and a drawn sword in his right, is the twin brother of Mathesis; for exactness in the material world corresponds to justice in the moral world. That which a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He who sows to the flesh shall to the flesh reap corruption, and he who sows to the spirit shall to the spirit reap life everlasting.

The justice of God is everywhere, and everywhere makes right might, makes wrong weak, makes selfishness stab itself with its own hands.

Daily the solar system travels through its millions of

miles of space; yet no one ever saw one law either alter or grow weak. For the eternal law is equally potent everywhere.

But here comes a deeply needed caution. We are artificially dividing God into attributes.

If you take a red glass, you will see the whole view red. Take a blue glass, and you will see the whole landscape just as well as before. Every tree, hill, and house is in the same relative position; it is simply colored differently. It was red; it is now blue. And so on of all the colors.

Now, a red glass is red just because it lets the red rays through and stops the others. A blue glass is blue for the same reason. Only when you get a colorless glass — that is, one that lets all the rays through with equal facility — do you see the view as it really is in Nature, with its thousand hues of green and blue and gold.

In a precisely similar manner we may behold the Divine Nature as through glasses of different hues.

If we look at God through the red glass of justice, we shall see infinite space only under the color of justice. Star and system, each vast, each tiny life, will be there, only seen through the monochromatic light of justice. There will still be due proportion to everything, for God's justice is equally present in everything. All space will still be represented, for God's justice is coextensive with God's space. Only, we must carefully bear in mind that we are excluding from our sight the tender shades that are equally present everywhere. We are deliberately making an artificial glare over everything.

But some one may say, "But red and yellow, green and blue, are different from each other." Yes; but they are simply different movements of the same element. The immense ocean of ether, which is in all space, is one; and red and green and blue are all waves of that one ocean, differing in breadth and height, — that is all.

Just so we must think of power, justice, wisdom in God as so many modes or attributes of his one infinite being.

VI. The wisdom of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space and all the other attributes of God.

If an archangel had been given the problem, "Nothing but God completely filling all space with his presence; from this to show how universes of matter and finite mind can be created," — the archangel himself would have been baffled.

How to make shore and boundary in the midst of the fathomless deep of God; how to build little local earth homes in the midst of limitless space; how to contrive that somewhere in the eaves of the temple of eternity the sparrow should find a house and the swallow a nest where she might lay her young; how to make material globes out of pure invisible space, — that was the problem; and that problem has been solved.

Wisdom is that which conceives some mighty plan, in order to achieve some great object. The wisdom is shown in the perfect adaptation of the plan to the fulfilment of the object. Make no mistake here. Be sure you are thinking all wrong, if ever you attribute to yourself a power that the great universe has not. You yourself have some capacity to plan, have some power to adapt means to ends. What a surprising little person you would be if the whole galaxy were to stand astonished at the new revelation you made to it: no such thing had ever been seen before! It is true that God's plan in creation has not been understood; and it is sadly true that most men seem to have lavished so much reverence on an unreal plan of creation that they seem to have none left for the real one. The old idea was that God made stars, suns, earths, plants, animals, and men out of nothing, just as they are. This thought has vanished to return no more, but only to give place to the thought of a plan immeasurably vaster, more inconceivably wonderful. You have to conceive that, before ever the atoms were, the thought of God planned out the whole creation; that, out of his own

being, he willed that the innumerable atoms which form the visible universe should proceed, and that each and all, in perfect proportions, should join together to build the mighty whole; that everything thus planned and created was seen, from the very beginning, to be very good; that, from that infinitely remote instant, no single atom has ever changed in size or in velocity of interior motion; that the proportions of each, thought out beforehand, have been absolutely kept; and that the result of this inconceivable dance of matter has been, and will forever be, good; and that each combination is the best possible, in order to reach the result aimed at. The thought of oxygen and hydrogen combining to form water is an absolutely perfect thought, and will forever produce good. This is equally true of each one of the immense series. Silicon, nitrogen, and carbon spring from a divinely perfect thought, — a thought that has resulted in divinely perfect action; while each one of their combinations with the other elements, and each of their relations to the perfect whole, are equally perfect. Granted the atoms and their spin, granted the pressure of God's presence everywhere, and you can predict the galaxy. Grant free motion of finite spirit within infinite Spirit, and you have free souls peopling that galaxy.

You are shut up, I say, to the conclusion that, before ever the worlds and atoms were, the thought of God measured size, shape, and velocity of spin of every atom, and also fitted each set of atoms to every other before he made them, unless you are ready to maintain that from all eternity, in a given inch, ten thousand trillions of little, self-existent, eternal oxygen gods found themselves, to their surprise, all exactly alike, and agreed, as it were, to act together; and then, still more to their surprise, became aware that there were in the self-same inch twenty thousand trillions of little, self-existent, eternal hydrogen gods, all exactly like each other, and all precisely fitted to join together

with half their number of oxygen gods or goddesses, as the case might be, and so on and so on, to the end of the ridiculous chapter. If you back out and shelter yourself in mystery, and say that the mystery of self-existent atoms is no greater than the mystery of creation, then I answer, One tremendous mystery in one universe is immeasurably more probable than a series of little petty mysteries, whose number could not be put down, if you filled the whole orbit of Neptune with figures so small that you would have to use a microscope to see them.

Forever the atom sings its tiny song in the ears of God, — a song of perfect, infinite content; for it knows that it and its Maker are alike perfect. To all eternity, it fulfils his will with absolutely unquestioning obedience. Now floating in the sunlight, now imprisoned in the petal of a flower, now hidden for seeming eternal ages in the darkness of the mine or entombed in the awful splendor of the central fires; now throbbing with the sun's inconceivable heat, now chilled by the bitter cold of interstellar space, — always and everywhere, with equal and unchanged joy, it fills its tiny but essential place in the unfathomable creation of God. It cannot "serve him much," but it can serve him forever, and can "please him perfectly."

"Wouldst thou the highest life know, the 'atom' can whisper its secret;
What that is without will, that be thou, man, with a will."

VII. The love of God is infinite, and is coextensive with space and all the other attributes of God.

"Tell me a man's ruling love," said Swedenborg, "and I will tell you what he is." Equally true is this: "Give me the sum total of a man's actions, and I will find out from them his ruling love." Let us then judge God by his acts. Whose are the iron and the stone? Whose are the cattle on a thousand hills? For whom do waves sparkle, winds blow, leaves rustle, and for whom does earth

pour forth her fruit? Is it for the sake of God that the sun shines, that the moon lights up the night? Has he built the stars for his habitation, and do their light-waves carry messages to him? Does gravitation keep his house together over his head? What, then, is all this creation for? Whose wants does it meet? Whose intellect does it stimulate? Whose life does it create, protect, and glorify? There is but one inevitable answer. The whole galaxy is built, gravitation pulls, light shines, electricity thrills, and the atoms cohere to form the worlds, simply and solely for the benefit of God's children. The whole cosmos is one mighty token of his love.

It is strange to hear a man like Tyndall speak of what seems the "appalling indifference" of Nature to the woes of man, as if Nature were one thing and man another, and they existed in two different universes, made by two different beings, for two different purposes; the truth being that this seeming indifference is the crowning triumph of the love divine. It means that in matter God has subjected himself to man; that in matter God takes upon himself the form of a servant; that in matter God is absolutely obedient to the dictates of his creatures. Keep the laws of matter, and you can shape it to what moulds you please. Meekly it will undergo all the blows wherewith you fashion it. With fire-beat and hammer-beat, you weld it to your will. In every mighty workshop of the modern day there is many a Jacob who will suddenly awake from his dream and say, "God was in this place, and I knew it not." In matter, man is the master, and God the servant; man proposes, and disposes also. In matter, God abdicates realm after realm of his kingdom, in order that his children may have a kingdom too. But it is more than this. God has only his own substance out of which to make this kingdom. In matter, God, by a divine act of transubstantiation, forever saith, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you!"

But you say, "Now, you yourself are limiting the power of God." Nay; it is God himself who is limiting his own power.

We do not understand in the least the perfection of God's self-surrender until we know that it is absolute. God has given his worlds away, and cannot take them back again. He has given to us, his children, real eminent domain over the things he has made. God has reserved to himself absolutely nothing of the galaxy. All is now the absolute property of his children. He has only reserved to himself the right to protect, to guide, to ransom, to rescue, to forgive; the right in all their affliction to be afflicted; the right to comfort and cheer and strengthen, and the right to protect the weak against the strong and to visit the one who wrongs his neighbor.

Jesus did not invent self-sacrifice. He discovered it, — discovered that self-sacrifice is the great central law of the universe, that this is the heart of God. He obeyed it, loved it, lived it, and gave himself for it.

God is love. This is the gospel, the good tidings which proclaim liberty to all captives and comfort all that mourn. It is the good news to all, to the weak as well as to the strong. God is love.

Here is a poor, lonely, forlorn old woman, living all by herself in some crazy attic in a tenement house. Husband, children, friends, are all dead and gone. It is night. The weary toil of the day, too much for the feeble frame, is over at last; and now the one romance of her desolate life begins. By the light of her one tallow candle, she opens her well-thumbed Bible at the passage which tells of that rest which remaineth for the people of God, — of that better, that heavenly country, where her dead are alive to God. Unconsciously she is trying a great experiment. In this miserable room is there anything besides rickety floor, falling plaster, crazy stove, and single chair and table and empty space around? Yes; there is. She reads

on, and the loved faces seem to smile once more upon her, and the loneliness departs; for the love eternal which surrounds her makes her sleep once more in safety.

She dies; and the beloved ones meet her, and lead her toward the great company of "loyal hearts and true," that she may hear the life-song of the redeemed. It fills her soul with joy at first. But very timidly, after a time, she asks if ever she may be possibly allowed just to catch a far-off glimpse of that third heaven she has read of, where God himself is moon and sun. Oh, yes! they will take her at once. Swiftly they carry her to that blest place. But where is she? Why, she is standing in the old rickety attic. This is the very stove, these the tumble-down walls. Here is each common thing that her past life wearied of so often. But, lo! wall and stove, chair and table, begin to shine, to grow transparent, to become part and parcel of the Love Divine, all love excelling. She has seen God, seen the fulness of Him that filleth all things.

One day, it shall be thus with us all: —

"Soon the whole,
Like a parted scroll,
Shall before my amazèd sight uproll,
And then be seen,
In unclouded sheen,
The Presence wherein I have ever been."

[No. 69]

MODERN BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

BY

REV. CRAWFORD H. TOY, LL.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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MODERN BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

The word "criticism" is used in a broader and in a narrower sense. In the broader sense, in which it means any judgment on the facts of life, it is loosely equivalent to "science." More precisely, science is exact and systematized knowledge, and criticism is the judgment based thereon. But no science is perfectly exact, and no criticism is perfectly correct. Man's effort to understand the world has been going on since the beginning of human life, and his judgments have become clearer with the growth of the power of exact observation and with the accumulation of details. He has always been a student and a critic, growing older with each generation and learning to study more wisely. The primitive savage and the child have their opinions of things; the difference between Caliban and Newton is one of degree, not of kind. The nineteenth century is not "*the* age of criticism," but only the latest stage of human inquiry, when man's curiosity is keener and his means of research better than ever before.

The terms "criticism" and "critical" are therefore properly applicable to any sort of study. We may speak of "critical philosophy" or "critical astronomy," meaning thereby philosophical or astronomical systems, based on exact analysis of facts. But they have come to be used also with special reference to the origin of books, the determination of their date, authorship, and constitution. Many books have come into existence at times and under

circumstances when no record was made of their birth and growth, — such as ancient poems and religious works, Hindu, Persian, Chinese, Babylonian, Hebrew, Greek, and later, Icelandic, German, French, Anglo-Saxon. These grew up like the strata of the earth's crust, when there was no eye to witness and no hand to record the successive formations and depositions. It is the task of the science of criticism to penetrate the obscurity of their beginning and tell the story of their growth.

This science is not the creation of our day, though it is now fuller, rounder, and better entitled to the name of science than ever before, — just as our physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, and all the exact sciences are better equipped and more effective than they were thirty or twenty or ten or two centuries, or even fifty years ago. It began, though feebly, long ago. Some centuries before the beginning of our era, the Alexandrian critics questioned whether the whole of the Iliad was the work of Homer, and whether the same man produced both the Iliad and the Odyssey. What the Greeks might under other circumstances have done towards building up a science of criticism, we cannot tell. After the Roman empire became Christian, literary energy was absorbed in theological discussion, and the old Greek people ceased to exist. It took many centuries for the barbarian conquerors of Europe to acquire literary training, and criticism did not show itself till poetry had reached its prime. Just after Milton's death, two famous literary feats were performed in England by Hody and Bentley. The former demolished the story of the pretended Epistle of Aristeas, that the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek at Alexandria by seventy-two men sent from Palestine at the request of the king of Egypt. The latter showed that the so-called Epistles of Phalaris, purporting to have been written in the sixth century B.C., were forgeries, and belonged to a much later time. Since Bentley's day

and especially within the last century, an enormous mass of critical work has been done on the old epic poems of Greece, India, and Germany, the sacred books of the Persians, Hindus, and Mohammedans, on Shakspeare and other poets, and in ancient and modern history.

Of this great movement Biblical criticism forms a part. It is simply the application of scientific critical methods to the writings of the Old and New Testaments. It, too, has a long history. In the first centuries of our era both Jews and Christians had much to say about the character and authorship of certain works. Jewish authorities refused to admit the Book of Enoch into the canon, and probably, therefore, decided that it was not composed by the old patriarch from whom it purports to come. The Church Fathers debated the origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews and other New Testament books. Somewhat later, Aben Ezra and other Jews began the criticism of the Pentateuch. Martin Luther spoke with his usual frankness of the merits and demerits of various parts of Old Testament and New Testament. During the past two centuries Biblical criticism has been pushed in earnest, moving hand in hand with its sister sciences. Its steady, thoughtful advance is a sign of its reasonableness; there is nothing spasmodic in it, no break with the past. If its latest results seem revolutionary, this is only because its history is not kept in view. And the same remark applies to chemistry, astronomy, philology, and every other science.

ITS SPIRIT.

The term "destructive," often applied to the Biblical criticism of our day, is in one sense true, in another sense untrue and misleading. It is true of this science in the same way in which it is true of every other science. The astronomy of our day has destroyed a part of that of Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Newton. Alchemy and old chemistry have vanished before the new chemistry. All dis-

covery of truth must be at the same time destruction of error. A great part of all human progress, in the individual and in the community, consists in throwing away mistakes. But it is evident that this process of destruction is undertaken in the interests of truth, and that it results in building up something better than what has been destroyed. The good in the past is preserved, and something is added to it. Scientific progress is always relative, never attaining perfection; but it gives the world something better than had been known before. It does not set itself to destroy; it only permits the fall of a structure whose foundations have given way.

All this is true of Biblical criticism. It destroys old beliefs, not for the sake of destroying, but because it would supersede the old by a better new. It is bold because it is reverent. It values truth too highly to sacrifice it to any opinion, however supported by tradition or hallowed by associations. This statement will appear to some persons to be self-evident; but there are others who seem to think that, while other sciences are good, this one is irreverent and malignant. Yet who can recall the names of the great critics, Spinoza, Lowth, Astruc, Schleiermacher, De Wette, Ewald, Baur, Hupfeld, Bleek, Reuss, Delitzsch, Weiss, and suppose that they have been influenced by hostility to anything good? We may regret the loss of Romulus, Semiramis, and William Tell, but we will not accuse the critical historian of unfriendliness to these personages; and in the same spirit we should accept the transference of Joseph and Esther from history to legend and fable. Great indignation was roused by Bentley's attack on the pretended Phalaris letters. But all the world knows that Bentley was a true lover of Greek literature, and did it a service by putting these letters in their proper place. No one has ever doubted Lachmann's devotion to the old Greek and German poetry. Yet he spent a great part of his life in cutting the Iliad and the Nibelungen to pieces. These

scholars were not unfeeling, nor can that term be justly applied to the modern critic who undertakes to dissect the Pentateuch into its parts and assign to each its date and origin. It is simply a question of historical fact. The critic may be wrong in his conclusions, and must then be proved wrong by critical argument: but, in any case, his first duty is not to the Pentateuch or the Iliad or any other book as such, but only to fact.

ITS METHOD.

The critical method is best explained by examples. It is simply the method of all scientific research, the effort to find reality and orderliness. We have the right to expect orderly progress in the history and agreement between any writing and the time in which it is said to have been produced. We assume that there is an explanation for everything, if we can only find it. If we discover breaks in the traditional history, or inversions of the natural course of events, we feel warranted in calling in question the correctness of the tradition and seeking to introduce order. Somewhere in the history, we may hope to find firm standing-ground of reasonably assured fact. If we cannot do this, criticism and history are impossible. But such standing-ground secured, we may work our way from it in both directions, trying to discover in each generation the effects of its predecessor and the grounds of its successor.

If we wish to learn the real course of the political history, we must begin by fixing on a period in which the facts appear to be narrated in something like their true order. Let us take the times of Saul and David, of which we have a tolerably full account in the Book of Samuel. It is evident that there is a good deal of legend and confusion in the narrative, but still we gain a clear historical picture. The persons of Saul and David are fairly well defined, and the modes of life and ideas of the time are intelligibly described. David's character and career may be traced, not

as distinctly as we should like, but still well enough to enable us to form a reasonably correct judgment of the man. We see a society with somewhat loose political organization, largely controlled by force. David, first as chief of a marauding band of outlaws and then as king, is a brilliant soldier, with all the good and bad qualities that belong to an infant civilization. He is brave and generous, but also vindictive and cruel. He slaughters Amalekites and Moabites without mercy; but he is loyal to Saul, and to Jonathan and his son, and abandons his intended vengeance on Nabal at the intercession of a beautiful and eloquent woman. This character he retains to the end, and by this well-assured picture we may judge other details given of him. We reject the story of his last days in Chronicles, and the religious poetry ascribed to him in Samuel, because these cannot be brought into harmony with what we have reason to believe he was. If, now, we follow the history back we find in the Book of Judges a series of short sketches which agree in their portraiture of the social and political situation with the idea we have gained of David. They represent a state of society still ruder than his, — no national unity, no nation, the different tribes assailed by enemies, military leaders starting up here and there, assassinations, violence, treachery. This condition of things begins with the conquest, which was effected, according to Judges, by a series of isolated attacks by the different tribes. We see a horde of half-civilized tribes pouring into the land of Canaan at different points, gaining settlements here and there, mingling with the natives, but holding their place, gradually getting control of a considerable territory, and making attempts at organization (Gideon).

We thus have an intelligible progress, from the first invasion to David. But it is like entering a different world to open the Books of Joshua, Numbers, and Exodus. In their narrative, all the natural conditions of social growth

are reversed. The rude, slenderly combined congeries of tribes vividly described in Judges appears in the preceding generation as a well-organized nation with a great body of laws, and their isolated attacks are preceded by a complete conquest of the land under Joshua. This story, which violates all historical probability, must be rejected; the march from Egypt through the wilderness, and the exploits of Moses and Joshua must be regarded as a mass of legend, whose kernel of history, if there be any, we are not able to extract. This reasoning applies with still greater force to the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, in Genesis. The ancestors of Ehud, Gideon, and Jephthah could not have led such lives. These biographies are beautiful legends, with here and there vague reminiscences of events of the time of the judges and later, or possibly dim recollections of an earlier period; but mostly they are products of the pious, patriotic imagination of a much later time, which liked to embody its own ideas in portraitures of eponymous heroes. The farther back its field lay from known facts, the more freely the imagination worked. Life becomes smoother as we move away from the social chaos of the Book of Judges: it advances in orderly historical fashion to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezra, and in the opposite direction passes unhistorically to the stately, well-rounded figures of the patriarchs, and thence behind them into the region of most shadowy legend and myth. After David and Solomon, the records give a substantially trustworthy historical narrative, with a constantly decreasing admixture of legend.

In like manner we trace the history of the religion, assuming a progress from the ruder and simpler to the more refined and complex. The religious opinions current in the generations next following the invasion of Canaan are clearly given in the Book of Judges, and those of succeeding times may be made out in reliable outline from the other historical books and the prophetic writings. Popu

lar traditions describing real occurrences and ideas may usually be recognized by their tone, and may be distinguished from the version of old events given by later writers who wrote under the control of a theory. The prophets are trustworthy witnesses to the condition of things in their own days. From these two sources we get a continuous history of the progress of religion on both its sides, the theoretical and spiritual and the ceremonial. The Israelitish documents themselves inform us that religious ideas continued to grow higher and purer, and the religious ritual more complicated, from the Conquest down to the times of Ezra and the Maccabees. In the days of Deborah, Gideon, and Jephthah, no rule of ritual or priest, great crudeness in morals and in the conception of the Deity. David begins the outward organization of religion by building a sacred tent in Jerusalem; but he thinks of the Deity as bound to the soil, has *teraphim*, or household gods, in his house, and sanctions human sacrifice. Solomon, while rearing a splendid temple to the national deity of Israel, includes many other gods in his devotions, apparently unconscious of wrong, and, as far as appears, unblamed by any contemporary prophet or priest; and Jeroboam I., also unrebuked, sets up calf images of *Yahwe* for his people's worship. The struggle in the northern kingdom for the sole worship of *Yahwe*, against foreign gods (not against Jeroboam's calves), is set on foot by Elijah and Elisha. The ideas of *Yahwe's* pre-eminence over all other gods in power and holiness, and his close and tender ethical relation to Israel find expression in the words of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, who are indifferent to the ritual. The first great law-book, Deuteronomy, appears under Josiah, with the condition of whose time as given in Kings and Jeremiah it perfectly agrees. During the exile, Ezekiel and others develop the ritual; and the second Isaiah rises to noble conceptions of the Divine majesty and purity and the function of Israel. A century

or two later the Levitical law (as we have it in Leviticus and Numbers) is introduced into Palestine by Ezra, and for this period we have pictures of inward spiritual life in Job and the Psalms. So consistent a portraiture, in which the religious ideas everywhere answer to the social conditions, we are justified in accepting as substantially true; and by it we may test all that the Old Testament says about the history of religion.

The account in the Pentateuch of legislation by Moses appears entirely out of place. All this body of laws (except a few simple and obvious ethical and ritual prescriptions) was unknown to Gideon, Samuel, David, and the greater part of it to Amos and Isaiah. They show no consciousness of it, but live as if it did not exist. It consists of layers which correspond to various periods of the social history; it is the growth of centuries, the epitome of the development of ceremonial usage, the ritualistic epic of the nation. The Book of Chronicles, written several centuries after the exile, when the Levitical legislation was well established, makes David and his successors acquainted with the whole law of Moses, and must be looked on as untrustworthy in its accounts of religion. The final editors of the Book of Kings in like manner treat the earlier history from the point of view of the Deuteronomic legislation. The prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple was composed under such influence. The ritualistic tone of Joel marks it as a product of post-exilian times.

In the New Testament, where the space of time traversed is small, there is less room than in the Old Testament for tracing the relation between the social condition and the religious and ceremonial ideas. The Pastoral Epistles, however, seem to many readers to contemplate a form of church government, and to oppose a system of philosophy and religion of which there are no indications in the Epistles which are assigned with reasonable certainty to

Paul. The theological system of Hebrews differs from that of Romans so greatly that the two can hardly be by the same author.

Besides these general lines of inquiry, there are many detached historical references which are marks of date. As the mention of Sargon in Isaiah xx. puts that chapter in the eighth century, B.C., and as the way in which Jeremiah speaks of Nebuchadnezzar shows that the prophet was a contemporary of that king, so the descriptions of Cyrus, in the second Isaiah, fix this prophecy as belonging to the latter part of the exile; and the same date is given for Isaiah xiii., xiv., Jer. l., li., by the expectation they show of the speedy fall of Babylon. The mention of Greeks in Zech. ix. and Joel probably points to the Greek period — that is, the time after Alexander the Great — for these productions; and in the appendix to Balaam's last utterance, Num. xxiv. 24, the same period seems to be indicated by the reference to an attack on Asia by Kittim, or Greece (from which it would appear that additions to the Pentateuch continued to be made long after Ezra's time). The Book of Daniel gives details of the Maccabean times (B.C. 175–164) so minute that the year in which it was written can be fixed. The references in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., to the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans show that these passages were composed or completed after that event. On the other hand, it appears from the opening of the eleventh chapter of the New Testament Apocalypse that part at least of this book was written before the fall of the city and the destruction of the temple (A.D. 70), as the enumeration of seven emperors, the sixth of whom was contemporary with the writer (xvii. 10), connects this section with the last days of Galba or Otho.

Other general considerations come in to aid inquiry. The material of chapters i.–xi. of Genesis is not referred to in any pre-exilian book, but suddenly presents itself in the exilian prophets, Ezekiel and the second Isaiah;

whence we may probably infer that these stories were borrowed by the Jews from the Babylonians, and gradually worked up into monotheistic shape, and made the vehicle for the expression of Jewish religious ideas. The thought and linguistic style of Ecclesiastes belong somewhere near the end of the third century B.C., and the language and tone of the Song of Songs point to the same period. Certain of the Psalms, especially xliv., lxxiv., lxxix., clearly describe Maccabean conditions (near 170 B.C.) ; and many others bear the impress of the Greek Syrian period. Matthew i., and Luke i. ii., stand out of connection with, and contradict the body of, the synoptic narrative, and are later additions. The Book of Acts does not agree in all points with the statements of Paul's Epistles, and its desire to harmonize the Jewish and Pauline views of Christianity indicates that it belongs to a later generation than that of Peter and Paul. It looks back from some distance at the heroic formative period of the Church, smooths over differences, making Peter talk like Paul and Paul like Peter, and works up the tradition in a free way, with plentiful addition of discourses and stories ; and it appears to contain one allusion (xx. 25) to Paul's death.

ITS RESULTS.

1. In the first place, criticism has made a considerable addition to our knowledge of history by introducing something like order into material which had before lain in a chaotic and unintelligible shape. The way in which the old Jewish literature came into existence was not favorable to clearness of arrangement. The utterances of prophets were sometimes not committed to writing and collected till after their death. Histories, philosophical disquisitions, and poems were usually published anonymously, or the names of the authors were lost, less interest being felt in the authorship than in the contents. The modern sense of literary ownership hardly existed at all. Editors made

additions to manuscripts according to their own ideas of fitness; and scribes combined different writings in one manuscript for various literary and scribal reasons, — from supposed agreement of contents, or to fill out a manuscript, or on the authority of some oral tradition. Hence it comes that our Books of Isaiah and Zachariah and Proverbs, and especially the Pentateuch, are congeries of writings belonging to different times; Judges, Samuel, and Kings are composed of strata of many generations; the Book of Job contains a large interpolation (chaps. xxxii.–xxxvii.); and none of the titles of the Psalms are reliable. Then, further, when the Jewish scholars set about collecting the books into canons, the controlling consideration with them was not chronology or authorship, but what they conceived to be their value for the religious life of the nation, and this at a time when the nation had almost become a church. First, the legal books were collected, then the prophecies and earlier histories, then, in the second century B.C., the poetry and later histories and other books. This was the Palestinian arrangement; but the Greek translators in Egypt changed it by throwing all the histories together, and putting the prophets after the poetry. It is not surprising that, with such manipulation, nearly all traces of orderly historical arrangement were lost. The task of criticism is to break up these mechanically united masses, give each part its proper place, and vindicate the true unity of the whole. If it succeeds, it adds new chapters to the political, religious-ethical, and literary history of the world.

The political life of the old Israelites was meagre and of little interest; but it appears that there was a gradual progress from lawlessness to civil organization, from tribal isolation to national unity, and that royalty came naturally out of the felt needs of the people (Gideon, Saul).

Perhaps the most striking result of Biblical critical study is the clear view it gives us of the history of Israel-

itish religion, — the banishment of the disjointed and unsymmetrical, and the exhibition of continuous progress. Not the wonderfulness, but the disorderliness, has been got rid of, so that we see the great religious idea of Israel ever taking fuller and more beautiful shape. In the dim distance, a vague polytheism; then, as the nation grows into unity, a crude and narrow devotion to the national deity, with struggles against foreign worships, — purification of the conception of God keeping pace with the advance of ethical feeling, and enlargement of the ceremonial usage following in the track of social-political organization; intensity of national self-consciousness and of the monarchical idea of government leading to practically pure monotheism (in the time of the exile), and then a parallel development of ethics and ritual (the Levitical law), and the passage of the broken nation into a church. This history is not unlike that of other national religions, but it is specially interesting to us because of the fulness of details extending over a long period of time, and because of the great part that Israelitism has played in our civilization. New Testament criticism shows us how Paul's idea of Christianity stood over against the Jewish Christian view (James), how there were various conceptions of the nature and work of Jesus (Matthew, Paul, Fourth Gospel), and how the constitution and government of the church were modified (Paul, Pastoral Epistles).

Our literary gain from criticism is twofold. We understand more clearly the historical development of the literature, and we feel more deeply its æsthetic power. The general order in the Old Testament is, folk-songs and stories of ancestors, small law-books, prophetic orations, continuous histories, lyric and philosophical poetry, great collections of laws and of traditions of primeval times; that is, first the spontaneous and naïve, and then the reflective, organized, and scientific, — an order that commends itself as natural as soon as it is proved to be true.

Time was when few people thought of the Bible as having literary charm; now it seems likely to get its rights. As interpolations are removed, unlike things separated and like brought together, and the proper historical setting given, we are coming to see the excellence of the Hebrew prose narrative style, unsurpassed for freshness and vividness, the eloquence of the prophets, and the beauty of the poetry. We shall feel the moral power of these writings not less, but more, for enjoying the literary charm. In the New Testament, the Epistles of Paul, with their eloquent treatment of doctrine and ethics, stand to the narratives of the Synoptic Gospels somewhat as the Old Testament prophets to the exilian historical books; then come the earlier portions of the Apocalypse, later Epistles treating new questions, the more reflective history of the Book of Acts, and the idealizing portraiture of the Fourth Gospel. Here, also, is a natural order that gives more living power to the moral element of the New Testament.

2. It is a still greater service of criticism that it helps to increase the moral power of the Bible by humanizing it. Here is a great literature whose deepest and best influence has been maimed by the false position forced on it. The Bible has been treated as an artificial book, its authors only seemingly alive. A wall has been built between it and human life. It has been dissected into texts till its human spirit has almost vanished. When we deplore the loss of its best influence, we do not mean that it has hitherto been without influence. On the contrary, we know that it has wielded immense power, and largely for good. But this power was based on the outward authority ascribed to the book as being a direct verbal revelation from God, whence also the artificial treatment of it as a hand-book of doctrine. No doubt this external stamp of authority gave it power, but not the best power. Its true authority is its appeal to the human soul. The divine that

is in it approves itself most perfectly when it issues from true human souls capable of manifesting the divine. It is living men and their thought that we want, for it is in this that we find help in the struggle towards the divine. Any book which takes hold of our human sympathies must find entrance into the soul, and, if it have real moral power, will penetrate and transform us with its spirit in a way far surer and completer than it could attain by a voice of command.

Criticism enables us to see in the Bible the souls and words of real men. We can trace the processes by which ideas and books came into existence. We can distinguish perplexities and doubts and the ways in which practical difficulties were overcome. The very simplicity of much of the material helps us to feel its naturalness. The stories of Elijah and Elisha and Samuel, the legends of the judges and patriarchs, the mythical narratives in the first part of Genesis, the naïve conceptions of physical law, show us the natural opinions of early times, while they are also made to convey moral-religious views. The later period of Israelitism used these flexible old stories as vehicles of higher instruction. Criticism is thus only an introduction to something better. Its object is to invest this section of human history with life. One who gets near to this ancient life will appropriate its ideal, and bear about with him in his own soul a purifying presence nobler and stronger than any word of outward command.

3. It is well to remember also that the modern criticism rids the friends of the Bible of certain inconveniences and unseemlinesses. Those of us who look on this book as a great literary and moral-religious classic of the world, and wish to see its power increased, have frequent occasion to deplore the manœuvres of attack and defence. One man laughs at the geology and astronomy of the Bible, and then sneers at the whole book; or he finds some moral crudeness, as the slaughter of the Canaanites or David's

crimes, and seems unable to find anything else. To him then replies some defender who seeks to prove the accuracy of Biblical physical science, and to show how God might reasonably command wholesale carnage, and how David might be a man after God's own heart. All this is lamentable. The occasion and possibility of these attacks and defences disappear as soon as we look on the Old Testament as the literature of an ancient nation, which grew from barbarism to culture, embodied in its writings all the phases of its life, and ascribed to divine command all its achievements. We may smile at the geology of Genesis and the astronomy of Joshua, as we may at the scientific ideas of Bacon and Milton; we may see David in his true light as a brave, cruel Oriental monarch, idealized by a later age into a model of piety; and we may justly regard the exterminating laws against the Canaanites (which were never carried out) as signs of an ethically rude age. But these things must stand by themselves, and do not affect the value of the better part of the Bible. The Israelites no doubt practised barbarities in war; it was the manner of the time. The Old Testament does not reach the idea of kindliness to foreign enemies; that is a defect in its ethics. The prophets are ethically narrow: their judgment of characters and events is usually determined simply by what they think the good of the nation; and they regard their own opinions as divine revelations. In like manner, the New Testament is not freed from ethical limitations. But when we put aside these scientific and ethical imperfections, there still remains a great moral ideal which we must recognize and honor. If we criticise the errors of the Bible, let it be with the reverence and tenderness with which we criticise the weaknesses of a great man.

There is one moral gain brought by criticism that should be specially emphasized. Great harm has been done by the indiscriminate defence of these crude Biblical statements and ideas, historical inaccuracies, discrepancies,

imperfect scientific and ethical ideas, — "difficulties" they are called, though this they are only from a certain point of view. One can easily understand why some religious men should wish to deny them and explain them away. They act under the control of a theory of inspiration which declares that there can be no errors in the Bible, and which they think essential to religion. Their system of defence is intelligible, but its results are bad. He who undertakes, for example, to defend as inspired the vindictive feeling of certain of the Psalms (as lxix., cix., cxxxvii.) is trying to ascribe to God what he would not commend to the community, because he knows that the moral sense of our times would reject it. It does not help the matter to say that these imprecations are directed against the enemies of Israel as the enemies of divine truth, and are, therefore, nothing but prayers in the interests of humanity that truth may prevail. If this were a correct explanation (which it is not) it would still not justify these Psalms. Their spirit is contrary to that of the Sermon on the Mount and our consciences, as any one may see if he will only undertake to apply these imprecations to the vilest wretches and greatest enemies of religion at the present day. His lips would refuse to utter the words. Now there is no difficulty for one who looks on the Psalms not as the words of God, but as songs composed by pious but imperfect men. But, if they be held up as in any special sense divine, then there ensues a conflict between the religious ideal and the moral sense. The attempt to force harmony between things radically opposed is apt to warp the intellect as well as obscure the moral vision. It can never be good for a community to believe that the moral standard of a supposed word of God is below its own, or to try to believe that a procedure, now certainly wrong, was formerly in some inexplicable way made right by divine command. The community will indeed preserve its practical moral judgments unimpaired; but the alleged word of God, vaguely accepted by the community as divine,

will cease to have any practical interest or value, or the attempt to prove that what is now ethically hateful to God was formerly acceptable to him will tend to produce intellectual and religious confusion. Criticism, by showing the human origin of the Biblical books, enables us to distinguish between the lower and the higher and truly divine human utterance. It teaches us to recognize the divine in the Bible and elsewhere, not by any outward sign, but by its appeal to what is divine within us.

We may sum up the moral-religious service of Biblical criticism in two words: it gives us the history of an attempt by former generations to interpret and perfect human life, and it leaves us free to choose from the Bible what can help us. Its first contribution is historical and archæological, its second touches the life of to-day. Its purpose is to separate between the transitory and the permanent, to distinguish the moral-religious essence and spirit of the Bible from the imperfect forms in which it clothed itself. It does not claim to have perfectly accomplished this purpose, but it hopes that a beginning has been made.

[No. 70]

THE

MIND OF CHRIST.

BY

REV. BROOKE HERFORD.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

THE MIND OF CHRIST.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? . . . But we have the mind of Christ. — 1 Cor. ii. 16.

What was "the mind of Christ"? What, especially, was "the mind of Christ" about these deep mysteries of religion, — these mysteries of Being which surround and enfold us, and which man seems equally powerless to solve or to let alone? What I have in my mind is not to illustrate some single truth, or to enforce some pointed saying, but to try to make out a brief connected view of the whole subject of religion as it seems to have lain in the mind of Christ and as it came out here and there in his teachings. Of course it can only be a sort of outline: but in these great subjects it is good to have the outline clear; and then, as you read and think and study out his great, wise meanings, these meanings take their true places, and the whole gradually fills out into the full rounded faith of a soul possessed by the Divine.

But perhaps, on the threshold, some one may feel like asking: Why should we particularly want to know "the mind of Christ" on these great subjects? Yet, if the holiest and clearest religious thought is to have *any* weight, this is the purest and most impersonal form of it. The very argument of those who most react against the common idea of "believing in Christ" is, that what we want is not to believe in Christ, but to believe as Christ believed. Again and again I have heard this very point emphasized, — that it is not faith in Christ we want, but the same faith that Christ had. Well, then, what was the faith that

Christ had? You see it is the very same question, — what was "the mind of Christ"?

But, in reality, I think there is much more than this. This is simply regarding the mind of Christ as *our* mind at its clearest, — the purest reading of the human mind on the subject of Religion. But, see! the purest reading of the human mind, if you can come at it, — what is that but also the clearest reading of the Divine mind? That is how Christ's teaching came home as such a surpassing help to Paul and the rest. The source of all wisdom is God; but who can get close enough to God, see clearly enough, to interpret the Divine thought? But in Christ the vast Divine thought is focussed, as it were, into clear human thought. That is what he means by saying, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? But we have the mind of Christ."

The more closely you look into it, the more you will see that, even philosophically, all this is sound. How does that Divine intelligence that is in and through all things express itself? In everything. The whole universe is its expression. Every flower is its expression. We have the mind of God in a lily; we have it in a snow-flake; we have it in a ray of sunlight. Yes; but who shall interpret? These are inarticulate; they have no distinct voice. And more, they often seem contradictory. You think you discern what the mind of God is, as you look at a rose, or feel the glow of the sunshine; but what is it in the Charleston earthquake or in a mosquito? Here is the weakness of all that idea of turning from the necessarily imperfect revelations through men, to the grand revelations of Nature. It is right, if you like to do it; only, there are quite as many perplexing texts in the Bible of Creation as in the old Scriptures, and it is not nearly so clear. But do you not see how the two lines draw together? Even on the ground of the merest naturalism, that intelligence which is in the universe comes to

its clearest interpretation in the mind of man, — clearest of all, in the purest, highest mind. And yet, the moment you recognize that, you are also on the very ground of Christian discipleship, for who has been so pure and high as Jesus? With a new confidence I turn to that thought with which I started, — what is "the mind of Christ" about all this Divine relationship which enfolds and holds our life?

But now, how are we to find out what was "the mind of Christ"? For the very phrase brings us face to face with this broad fact, — that every church thinks it has "the mind of Christ," and yet the churches are so different, hold such different creeds! But how do they come by those different creeds? Think of the great councils that elaborated them! Think of the search up and down the whole Bible in order to find their materials! Why, that old thought — only slowly passing away even now — of the whole Bible as *all* inspired, all the very words of God, — every part equally to be consulted and equally authoritative, — that old idea is quite sufficient to account for all the varieties of creeds. I do not want to undervalue any part of the Bible, — it is all helpful in some way; but understand what it is: it is the mind of Abraham, the mind of Moses, the mind of Isaiah, the mind of Paul and John and Peter; and in all those minds there was something of the Spirit of God, — not equally in all, but something in all. But for the clearest mind of God we have said that we will look for the mind of Christ. Let us look for it, then, just in a simple, natural way. If you want the mind of Moses, you turn to the Pentateuch. If you ask what is the mind of Paul, turn to Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles; and it is a great thing to have the mind of Paul, for he stood very near to Christ, and saw the great light, and it burned in his soul, and made all things new to him. Yet it was not quite the same. I still come back to the original quest: What was "the mind of Christ"? and for that the course is equally clear. The

moment we really put it in that straightforward, simple way, there is no difficulty. Here are the stories of Christ's life; here are the accounts of his own preaching. Of course they are only imperfect. They do not tell all that he said or did, and what they do tell us has come through the medium of smaller, dimmer minds than his; and still, there it is that we come closest to him. There is the heart of the whole matter. Go to these Gospels! See what Jesus went about teaching, what he put foremost in his discourses, what he seemed most to want to persuade people to believe in, and to be, and to do; — there is "the mind of Christ"!

And what a deliverance it is, at once! I do not mean the mere deliverance from the intellectual perplexity of examining all the Scriptures, and all the varied systems of doctrine that men have thought they gathered from them. That is a deliverance; but it is a still greater deliverance to be lifted clear out of all that kind of thing. Do you ever remember in your school-days sitting puzzling over some complicated problem of arithmetic or algebra, — puzzling until your mind felt all confused, and your brain in a whirl, and at last it almost seemed as if the whole thing was nothing real, but just a feverish, aching dream; and then you shut your books and said you would just leave it, and you got up and went out on the grass and into the sunshine, and into all the sweetness and restful beauty of the open world? What a change it was! Do I exaggerate in saying that it is like that when you turn from all the puzzling and elaborate systems of the schoolmen, to that gracious life of Christ, with its quiet wisdom and holy thought? This is not *my* feeling only. Listen to this: "Read Jonathan Edwards's most famous sermon, and then turn to the opening sentences of the Sermon on the Mount, or read almost anything that fell from our Lord's lips, and I venture the assertion that any man, even the most unimpressible,

must feel" the difference. Those are the words of a good orthodox Congregationalist, the Rev. Reuen Thomas. And they are true. It is not that Christ formally condemns these intricate theologies, — it is that with him you feel at once that none of these things are the real heart of religion. He never troubled himself nor other people with such matters, one way or another. Religion, as he tried to make men realize it and live it, was a very simple matter. It was a great resting in a Divine Fatherly love and care, the upward look of thankfulness and prayer and trust; but hardly a word about God's abstract nature or the particular doctrine men should hold about him. It was a kind, brotherly, helpful feeling towards men, and a deep concern and sorrow for their sins, with solemn, earnest warning of how terribly sin separates us from God both in this world and in the world to come; but never a word of abstract doctrine either about human nature or about sin. It was a wide, large thought of the glorious heaven to come, as not merely intended for his own Jewish people (as they fancied) but for all the great family of God; and with a great dread, too, of what it would be to be shut out from that great blessedness by hardened sin, but no minute doctrines either about its glory or its woe. This was the religion of Jesus Christ; and all came to a point in that great word for its realization in life, "the kingdom of God," and in his great effort to draw men into that kingdom, to teach them his own large, blessed faith, and band them together for the helping and saving of the world.

That is "the mind of Christ" as you see it coming broadly out in the whole story of his life and preaching and death. And it is a grand help to see it. I do not mean that it makes everything clear. Of course not; but it makes one willing to leave a great deal not clear. It makes one no longer anxious to know just how everything is, or is going to be. Looking at that merciful,

trustful spirit of Christ, even if we never could get any further than that, it would be enough to rest in and to live by, — just in loving God, and trying to do one's best, and feeling that all will come out mercifully and rightly.

But this is not all the help there is in considering what was "the mind of Christ." We want to get further if we can. We want our faith to be not only this vague, trustful, hopeful feeling, though even that is very good, but we want to have it based on some large, but still clear, distinct thoughts. And this clearer thought is here for us still in the thought of Christ. If you take these different points that are involved in that trustful, hopeful faith, and ask what was "the mind of Christ" about God, and what was it about man, and what was it about the great life beyond, — that same way of looking at the subject will show you, not, indeed, any detailed doctrines, but a wonderful light of clear, simple thought in all these directions.

For instance, you say: What was "the mind of Christ" about *God?* Well, if you look at the way in which he was constantly speaking about God, it is not difficult to make out. For his mind was full of a great, possessing sense of God. You cannot find anything of theological definition; he does not seem to have taught a single new doctrine about God. It was simply the old monotheism of his people, — the one Almighty Being, but more spiritual and more loving; the great Providence in all nature, making the lily beautiful, and caring for the birds of the air, — not a sparrow falling to the ground without him, — and much more caring for his children; the Infinite Presence, the Holy Spirit, seeing us all in secret, hearing our prayers, and to whom he taught men to pray, not with formal prayers, but as children opening their hearts to the heavenly friend. Especially does he seem to have felt so intensely the presence and help of God in the inward

life of the soul; so that he spoke of his own dwelling in God, and God in him, and told his disciples that it was the same for them, — "He dwelleth in you and shall be in you." Not a word about "Trinity in Unity," or "three persons" in the Godhead, or any of those terms that the creeds have most dealt in; just the one Infinite Being, for whom the best word was "Heavenly Father;" — that seems to have been "the mind of Christ" about God; and he himself prayed to Him, and looked up to Him, just as he taught his disciples to do, — as he said, "My father and your father, my God and your God."

Again: What was "the mind of Christ" about *Man?* Perhaps you have been perplexed by some of the doctrines about human nature that you have been taught as the Christian belief on the subject. You have heard it laid down that man was created perfect at first, but that through Adam's sin the race fell into utter wickedness, so that every child is born corrupt by nature and incapable of any good. Well, if ever you are perplexed by such ideas, go to the Master, and see how he seemed to look upon those about him. Watch him take up the little children, with that loving word that his disciples must become like little children, "for of such is the kingdom of God." That does not look as if he thought them quite so lost and evil as the theologians have been apt to make out! And as for older people — well, he had a very deep sense of all the sinfulness there is in men, and I doubt if any one ever felt the sadness and terribleness of sin as he did; but yet he never seemed to feel that men were *all* sin, and could not be anything else: on the contrary, he always seemed to feel that they could be; and though he never laid down any definite doctrine of a natural goodness in man, he was all the time taking it for granted and appealing to it. And how simple was his appeal! Never a word about any scheme of salvation to be fulfilled, or any mysterious atonement to be made, be-

fore God's justice could be satisfied and man be received into God's forgiving love! It was simply "Repent, and leave your sins, and turn to the better way, and God is waiting with his free and gracious love. Watch and pray; do your own best, and seek the help of God, and God's love and help are with you!" Indeed, he seems to have had a very tender reverence for human nature; and instead of feeling it all lost and ruined, he seemed to feel how little of real, loving turning to God would make the world almost like Heaven!

Once more: What was "the mind of Christ" about *the life to come?* That is perhaps, of all subjects, the one on which we most long to know his real thought. Yet here his language is so full of parable and figure that it is often difficult to be clear about it. And the difficulty has been increased by the way in which those parables and figures have been taken literally, and mere touches of vivid imagining have been interpreted as exact descriptions of the things to come. Still I do not think that it is at all impossible to come at Christ's real thought, if we divest our minds of this idea of looking for exact doctrines, and simply try to gather his larger thought. Thus, the main thought of man's immortality stands out clearly all along his teachings. His words are all alive with it, — with the sense that this is only the beginning of things, that that change which men call death is only a passing on into the higher world. His thought of this is all the more striking because so different from the belief of the time. Not all believed in the life to come. Those who did, believed only in some dim, distant, far-away resurrection, hardly connected with the present life, hardly any living comfort or hope. To Christ it seems to have been so close, so present, — divided from this earthly being, as it has been said, only by some "thin partition of unconsciousness," — that he could hardly speak of death except as falling asleep, and going to the Father.

And then his one predominant thought about this great future was its moral character, — that all men take on with them into its searching light and judgment just what they have been on earth. His general thought about it, indeed, seems to have been of a great wide heaven into which the multitudes of earth should come from north and south and east and west, — such a wide hope as his people (who never thought a Gentile could be there at all) had never dreamed of. Yet, just because the light seemed so wide and bright and glorious, did the shame and anguish of being shut out from it seem the more sad and terrible. And so came those stern warnings against sin; those dread pictures of the selfish and the hardened wanting to enter in and being shut out into the outer darkness; those sometimes piled-up figures of fire and pain, to arouse torpid souls to the awfulness of awakening from the dreams and disguises and deceptions of earth to the light of that greater world where all sin unrepented would be hell. I do not wish to soften down those parables of judgment; but, still, never forget that they were parables. And to understand Christ's thought about them you must think of them as they were in him, — as folded in by his larger thoughts of hope and love. I do not mean that he ever laid down any distinct doctrine, either of future probation or of all being at last redeemed. What was in his mind was just to put to men with all his power the dreadfulness of passing on hardened and sinful to that great world which might be such a bright and glorious blessedness. But over all lay still, in his mind, the Infinite Love; and here and there it touches even his darkest parables of woe with little lights of hope, which show you that at any rate there was no thought in him of eternal despair! No: even for those who seem most lost, the mind and spirit of Christ leaves always hope; and for the common life of mankind, his thought of the great future seems full of tender and encouraging graciousness.

I dare say some of you may feel that I have not exactly met the common questioning upon these deep things just in the way people usually expect. True: and I have not, because I feel that that common textual method of parcelling out these great thoughts of religion into clear-cut little doctrines is all wrong! It is such formal statements which most keep people apart. I wish that we all could pass beyond, behind, those old ways of doctrinal statement, and simply look to that wonderful life which eighteen centuries ago touched the world's heart with such a new outburst of piety and faith. We should have our faith cleared and strengthened, and feel how, behind all differences of opinion, men are not so far apart in the real spirit of their seeking for God, and thinking of men, and looking on to the great life beyond. And it would be thus, in this larger thought, that we should find most help and joy in religion. You make out little statements wrapped up in packages and labelled this or that "doctrine," and after all they are not much help or joy. But take Christ's hand, and simply look up reverently towards that great Life as he breathes out "Our Father!"—stand by his side, and look with him into the infinite meanings and possibilities that are in the face of the youngest child or poorest man,—stand by his cross, and catch the great glad trust and hope of that dying cry, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!"—and there—there is something that lifts up your soul into life's grandest meanings! There is something to think about, and to talk of with one's closest friends, and to pray about to the great Friend of all! And there is something that, so thought of and wrought into our minds, will help us to walk these common ways with firmer tread of duty, and with uplifted faces of happy trust, knowing that the things invisible are the things that are forever!

[No. 71]

UNITARIANISM

BY

REV. RUSH R. SHIPPEN

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity: and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

UNITARIANISM.

Unitarianism is primarily the belief in the unity of God. In a comprehensive sense it includes, with a part of Christendom, Jews, Mohammedans, Deists, and all who worship God as one. For this use, however, the accepted term is "Monotheism." Within the ranks of Christendom the name "Unitarian" is given to those who reject the dogma of the Trinity in its varying phases of a threefold or tripersonal deity, whether three in substance, or only in name and form, and who maintain the essential unity of God as Creator and Father, and the derived nature and subordinate rank of Jesus Christ. Within this range opinions about Jesus vary, from those that assign him a pre-existent and superangelic rank, to an estimate purely human. While the name strictly touches this doctrine only, it is vitally related and gives character to the whole system of belief concerning human nature and its need, human life and its purpose, this world and its meaning, and the future world and man's destiny.

I. History of the Belief.

1. *In the Early Church.* — Unitarianism has accompanied Christianity from the beginning at least as one form of its faith. Unitarians maintain that their faith is that of the Early Church as taught by Jesus and his apostles. They appeal to Jesus as the supreme teacher of Christianity, finding in his word and character the essence of the Gospel. They state their chief tenets in the language of

the New Testament, without note or comment: "To us there is but one God the Father;" "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." They hold that the doctrine of the Trinity, so startling to Jews trained in the worship of one God, and expecting a Messiah of human lineage, would have required a statement more explicit than any found in the Bible record. They hold that the doctrine, at best, is an inference from texts of obscure meaning or doubtful genuineness, every one of which is separately abandoned by prominent Trinitarian scholars as not expressly teaching the doctrine; while the Roman Catholic holds it on the authority of his Church, deeming it not clearly taught in the Bible.

Unitarians consider the doctrine of the Trinity a gradual development as Gentiles came into the Church and subjected the Gospel to the influence of Oriental speculations and Greek philosophy. The followers of Zoroaster and Plato, teaching the eternal antagonism of spirit and matter, filled the time with speculations concerning God as a superior essence creating the world by inferior divinities. In the Platonic doctrine of the Logos began the gradual deification of Jesus, consummated only by votes of successive councils of the fourth century. A succession of testimonies meanwhile show the continued existence of faith in the undivided unity of God. In the latter half of the second century Justin Martyr says: "Some there are among ourselves who admit that Jesus is Christ, while holding him to be man of men." Still later, Tertullian says: "Common people think of Christ as a man." About the year 200 Tertullian was himself the first to introduce into Christian theology the word "Trinitas." The unity of God was expressly taught by a sect called the "Monarchians." Some held that God the Father himself was born and suffered in human form, and hence were called "Patripassians." Of these were Beryllus, bishop of Bostria

in Arabia; Praxeas, who came from Asia Minor to Rome; Nœtus of Smyrna; and, still later, Sabellius, a presbyter in the Church about A.D. 250, the most original and profound mind among the Monarchians. The teachings of Sabellius, variously represented by friend and foe, are not very accurately to be known. He had followers as late as the fifth century in Mesopotamia and in Rome. Others held that Christ was in nature purely human, but exalted by his superior measure of divine wisdom and inspiration. Of these were Theodotus of Byzantium, Artemon of Rome, and Paul of Samosata. The last, a noted teacher, bishop of Antioch from the year 260, makes prominent the human personality of Christ, teaching that "Christ was a man . . . exalted to peculiar union with the divine nature by the illumination of divine wisdom." Deposed in 269, his name became a synonym for heresy; and in the next century the celebrated historian Eusebius confirms the testimony that he taught "that Christ was in nature but a common man." Speculation and controversy thus went forward until, in the beginning of the fourth century, the relation of God and Christ had become a question of *substance* or *resemblance*. In the famous theological struggle over the terms *homo-* and *homoiousian*, whether God and Christ were of the same or only similar nature, Arius maintained that Jesus was a created being. He was opposed by the bishop Alexander, aided by Athanasius; and the controversy waxing hot, opinion was divided, until Constantine, recently come to the throne as the first Christian Emperor, summoned, in A.D. 325, the Council of Nice, in which the angry storm of the three hundred theologians was allayed, and Arius and his doctrine were condemned. The historian Eusebius naïvely says: "The Emperor succeeded in bringing them into similarity of judgment and conformity of opinion on all controverted points." For another century controversy continued as to the Holy Spirit, the double nature of Christ, and Mary

as mother of God, all of which questions were gradually settled by majority votes of successive councils, culminating in the Creed long attributed to Athanasius, but now believed to have been written a hundred years after his death.

In surveying the opinions of the Early Church, it thus becomes clear that Unitarianism existed from the beginning; that the belief in the Trinity and in the deity of Christ was three or four centuries gradually forming; that during this period the range of opinions concerning Jesus was as widely varied as at the present time; that two or three hundred years after the death of Christ it was still doubtful, and settled only by the majority of a council whose decision was secured through the influence of a newly converted Emperor, whether the Christian Church should regard Jesus as a person in the Godhead, or, as the Apostle Peter declared him, "A man approved by signs and wonders which God did by him." The Unitarian deems the doctrine of the Trinity a corruption of the pure Gospel by philosophic speculation, and seeks, as the essence of Christianity, the practical religion taught by Jesus Christ, — of love to God and man.

It may be added as a fact of interest, and significant of the aid rendered to Christianity by this branch of the Church, that one of the chief lights of Arianism, the Gothic Ulfilas, — who was born near the lower Danube at about the time of the Council of Nice, and consecrated bishop at the age of thirty, and who was familiar with the Latin, Greek, and Gothic languages, — devoted himself to the religious and social development of his people, and rendered his name forever to be honored by his translation of the Bible into his native tongue, which at once helped to give lasting form to the Gothic language and to perpetuate Christianity among the Gothic people. For four centuries the Goths were accompanied in their migrations by this sacred national work, portions of which

still remain in the University Library of Upsal, in Sweden. The sect of the Nestorians also, who may be fairly counted on the Arian side, in about the seventh century were the first to carry Christianity to the far East, into Persia and China.

2. The Reformation reveals Unitarianism existing, and awakens it to renewed life. It accompanied Protestantism from its cradle, as it had accompanied primitive Christianity. Before Luther's death it had appeared in Italy, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland, Germany, and England. In the contest with the Pope and his hierarchy, the majority of Protestants, absorbed in the struggle for freedom, accepted unchallenged, as their hereditary belief, substantially the doctrine of the Romish Church. Yet in every Protestant confession the doctrine of the Trinity is reiterated, as if on the defensive; while the testimonies of Calvin, Melanchthon, and others against the Unitarian heresy reveal its strength. Among the many who before and after the Reformation bore witness to their faith in persecution and death, Unitarianism has its own list of confessors and martyrs. In Bishop Mant's History of Ireland is a brief account of Adam Duff, who for his denial of the Trinity was burned alive near Dublin in 1326. The early theological repositories make record of a priest, William Taylour, put to death as an Arian in England in 1422.

Conspicuous among the Reformers were the Unitarians Servetus and the Socini. Michael Servetus, born in Villanueva, Aragon, in 1509, the year of Calvin's birth, while studying law at Toulouse heard of the contest, left that city and his profession and sought the Reformers Œcolampadius at Basle, Bucer and Capito at Strasburg, and Calvin at Paris. His bold genius pushed past them in seeking a rejuvenated Christianity. Skilled in mathematics and the Oriental languages, in law, medicine, and theology, his fearless spirit of inquiry and eager thirst

for truth gave the highest interest to his religious speculations. "Your Trinity," he declares, "is a product of subtlety and madness. The Gospel knows nothing of it. The old Fathers are strangers to these vain distinctions. It is from the school of Greek sophists that you, Athanasius, prince of tritheists, have borrowed it." Such declarations provoked bitter hostility. Zwingli denounced him as "that wicked and cursed Spaniard;" Calvin spoke of him as the "frantic" Servetus, who "has thrown all things into confusion." When Servetus published his seven books on the errors of the Trinity, and his more noted work on the restoration of Christianity, severely criticising Calvin's views, his doom was sealed. On his flight from persecutors at Vienne, as he stopped at Geneva, Calvin caused his arrest and trial. The flames of Protestant persecution dismissed into eternity, through frightful agony, this brave soul that dared assert the absolute unity of God. The leading Reformers expressed no regret, but silently or openly approved it.

Lælius Socinus, born in Siena in 1525 of distinguished ancestry, an able critic, familiar with Biblical languages, a member of the famous Vicenza Secret Religious Society of Forty, on their dispersal fled to France, England, Poland, and at last to Zurich, where he died at the age of thirty-seven. A student rather than reformer or controversialist, he yet left behind him a deep impress of his free and original thought. His nephew, Faustus Socinus, born also in Siena, in 1539, was expelled from Italy at twenty, studied at Basle, and visited Poland and Transylvania, where, carrying forward his uncle's thought and work until his death in 1604, he became the more active and noted leader of Socinianism.

Less conspicuous, but with these, may be named in Germany, Cellarius, Capito, Johann Denk, Sebastian Frank, and the scholarly Ludwig Hetzer, one of the earliest leaders, who for writing against the deity of Christ was

imprisoned by the magistrates of Constance, and suffered death in 1529; also Claudius of Savoy; George Blandrata in Transylvania; Gonesius and Farnovius in Poland; Stephen Dolet, friend and disciple of Servetus, who at the age of thirty-seven was tried for heresy and burned alive in Paris in 1546; and John Valentine Gentilis, who preached in France and Switzerland, and suffered death at Berne in 1566, saying, as he laid his head on the block: "Many have suffered for the glory of the Son, but none have died for the glory and supremacy of the Father."

3. In *Italy* before the Reformation the doctrines of the Trinity encountered dissent, the advocates of which were driven from the country, or were attracted by the larger freedom farther North. Thus went forth many to Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, and Poland, among whom were the famous Socini and the celebrated preacher Bernardo Occhino. Hundreds also were put to death, among whom were James Palæologus, burned at Rome, and Sega and Guirlanda, drowned at Venice. There has been no recognized or organized Unitarian body of any strength in Italy, although it is believed there are many who hold this faith. The advocate Magnani for years conducted Unitarian services at Pisa; the astronomer Filopanti lectured in Bologna, Milan, Rome, and Naples upon Channing, the distinguished American Unitarian leader, of whom further mention will be made below; and Professor Ferdinando Bracciforti, of Milan, the translator of Channing's works into Italian, for years conducted Unitarian services in various Italian cities. Professor Sbarbaro, in the "Rivista Europa" of October, 1879, argues that Channing supplies the form and spirit of the religion needed by the craving heart of thoughtful Italy. He there says: "I have made choice of Channing as the most eloquent witness and irrefragable proof of the new evolution of Christian thought in the world, and of the reform which is in

process of initiation in human religiousness, because in the story of his career and in the fortunes of his books, in the marvel of their rapid diffusion in all corners of the civilized earth, is to be seen the most luminous and triumphant proof of the reality of that movement which is inwardly transforming European society, and bringing it, little by little, to worship under the roof of a new temple, — that Church, really catholic, whose frontal shall bear, without untruth, the inscription, 'To the One God,' which Mazzini hailed on the façades of the Unitarian churches of Hungary."

4. In *France*, reporting one million Protestants, since the martyrdom of Dolet in Paris no specific Unitarian movement has been known. But during the last fifty years, in the Reformed Church, which is mostly Trinitarian, has been a growing liberal party, among whom the Coquerels, father and son, Martin Paschoud, Fontanes, Colani, Vincent, and Bost, have substantially represented Unitarianism. Present liberal preachers in Paris are MM. Bonet-Maury, Jean Réville, Roberty, Charles Wagner, and A. Reyss. Their journals are "Le Protestant" and "La Vie Nouvelle."

5. In *Switzerland*, where the early Unitarian martyrs (Hetzer at Zurich in 1529, and Servetus at Geneva in 1533) paid the penalty of their lives, the spirit of liberty in Church as in State has prevailed; and, without separate formal organization, Unitarian sentiments from the first have been steadily held. The Swiss Church has been committed to no dogmatic declaration, but only "to preach purely and fully the word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures." The Genevan Church in general denies the equality of the Son with the Father, and the Godhead of the Messiah. The correspondent of the "Evangelical Christendom," Feb. 1, 1875, says: "The Grand Council of Basle, on the question of the deity of Christ on May 2, 1871, decided in the negative by a vote of sixty-three voices

against forty-eight." Étienne Chastel, professor of ecclesiastical history at Geneva, is among Channing's most ardent admirers. French Switzerland has itself produced two great liberals, — Samuel Vincent and Alexander Vinet, who were largely in sympathy with Unitarian thought. The faculty of the Theological School connected with the University of Geneva is predominatingly liberal.

At the present day, about one-half of the Protestants of Switzerland are liberal in opinion. They co-operate in the *Schweizerischer Verein fuer freies Christentum*, which meets biennially and has many local branches. Prominent liberal Swiss preachers in sympathy with our principles are Revs. Alfred Altherr, L. Ragaz, Braendli, and H. W. Schmidt, of Bâle; H. Marthaler, E. Ryser, and Prof. Marti, of Berne; Prof. P. Christ, and Revs. G. Schoenholzer and Walter Bion, of Zurich; Profs. E. Montet, A. Chantre, H. Balavoine, and Revs. C. Cougnard, E. Rochat, T. Gaillard, and A. Vincent, of Geneva.

6. *Holland*, like Switzerland and America, always hospitable to those who are exiles for conscience' sake, has never been wanting in representatives of a free theology. Of its two and a half million Protestants, about four fifths belong to the Reformed Church; which again has its two parties of Orthodox and Modern. Since the burning, in 1569, of Flekwyk, a Dutch Baptist, for his denial of the Trinity, there has been continued progress.

In the Dutch Reformed Church of Holland, some 400 of its 1,400 parishes are avowedly liberal, *i. e.*, in practical agreement with Unitarian principles. In many of the orthodox parishes, there is a considerable liberal minority. The important Remonstrant sect is frankly Unitarian in its theology, as is the majority of the Mennonite churches. The large Free-religious Society of Amsterdam (Pastor, P. H. Hugenholtz, Jr.) is on a theistic basis. The organ of the Dutch liberals is the *Protestantenbond*, an influential association with many

local branches. Its journal is *De Hervorming*, of Amsterdam. The theological faculty of the University of Leiden is liberal, while the modern point of view has its representatives at all the other universities. Prominent in this cause in more recent times were Revs. Hofstede de Groot, J. J. Swiers (the translator of Channing's works into Dutch, 1850-1859), Profs. A. Kuenen, J. Scholten, and C. P. Tiele, the brothers Hugenholtz, Profs. H. Oort, B. D. Eerdmans, S. Cramer, A. Bruining, H. I. Groenewegen, T. Cannegieter, H. J. Elhorst, and Rev. F. C. Fleischer.

7. *Germany*, that gave the world, along with Luther, some of the first Unitarian Reformers, during the succeeding three and a half centuries, without any distinctly organized Unitarian movement, has, with its noted scholarship and philosophy, produced all shades of rationalism, from extreme orthodoxy to extreme unbelief. In South Germany, governmental statistics of 1861 report three hundred and twenty-five thousand Unitarians. Says Dr. Beard: "The Trinity subsists among the learned of Germany only in name. The patristical doctrine has been attenuated to a shadow or reduced to nothing; if brought down into scriptural form it is abandoned; if converted into three somewhats, it is no longer such as the creeds declare or their advocates recognize. The doctrine once taught and held for an essential article of Christian faith is virtually repudiated and silently disowned." A translation of Channing's complete works, by Sydow and Schultze, was published in Berlin in 1850. More recently, the Chevalier Bunsen, in his "God in History," speaks of Channing as a "grand Christian saint and man of God, — nay, also a prophet of the Christian consciousness regarding the future." The Protestanten-Verein of Germany, established at Eisenach in 1865, a free Union Association holding annual conference sessions, though not organized on a dogmatic basis and not professedly Unitarian, welcomes and

cherishes fellowship and sympathy with the Unitarians of England and America. Its organ is the *Protestantenblatt*, of Berlin and Bremen, edited by Revs. R. Emde and D. M. Fischer. The stronghold of liberal opinions is the German University. Among its representatives are Profs. A. Harnack, Otto Pfleiderer, R. Lipsius, Holtzmann, Nippold, Eucken, Weinel, Bossuet, Delitzsch, with many others.

8. In *Poland* the Unitarian faith early took a firm hold and spread rapidly, aided by refugees who there found a hospitable asylum. Yet it was not without persecution at the start. In 1539, in the market-place in Cracow, was burned Katharine Vogel, at the age of eighty, wife of a goldsmith and alderman, condemned for denying the deity of Christ and affirming the divine unity. In 1552 the Bible was translated, chiefly by Unitarian scholars, into the Polish language. Hither came Faustus Socinus, around whom flocked converts from all ranks and classes of society, among them many of the nobility. These last, protected from persecution by the privileges of their rank, proved especially favorable to a movement which, more than any other of the time, seemed destructive of the traditions and prestige of the Romish Church. The prosperous commercial city of Racow, with its large printing establishment, publishing many of the best books of the day, became its headquarters. Here was issued the famous Racovian Catechism, which became widely known and influential, and was afterwards signally burned in London. King Sigismund II. became a convert, and during his reign this party of Reformers grew strong enough to form a church of their own. For a century it flourished, till, in 1660, Prince Casimir, a cardinal and a Jesuit, coming to the throne, with unrelenting persecution burned the homes of its adherents, driving them into silence, exile, or death. So effectually did he exterminate it, and with it the spirit of liberty in the State as in religion, that it may fairly be said that Jesuit tyranny obliterated at once a church and a nation.

9. In *Transylvania* Unitarianism was earliest declared by Lælius Socinus, escaping from persecution in Italy, and later by his nephew, Faustus Socinus, who in accordance with the Racovian Catechism organized a church. Georgio Blandrata, an Italian from Piedmont who became court physician to the Polish king Sigismund, also eagerly proclaimed the Unitarian faith. As the Hungarian king John Zapolya married Sigismund's daughter, Blandrata came with them to Transylvania, and at Thorda communicated his views to Francis David, then the court preacher, who warmly welcomed them and became their zealous advocate. As freedom of conscience was proclaimed in the year 1557, a fair field was opened, and Francis David became the chief apostle and real founder of Unitarianism in Transylvania. In 1566, from a round stone in the open street of Kolozsvar (Anglicized Klausenburg), he preached to a great multitude, asserting the Father to be the one only God; and such was the effect of his discourse that the whole city of Kolozsvar, including the Prince and his Court, were converted to the Unitarian faith. In 1568 the Unitarian religion was legally recognized, and many Unitarian churches established; and in 1868 the three hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the first Unitarian Church was celebrated.

While persecution was rife in the rest of Europe, Transylvania was early conspicuous for religious liberty. Four forms of Christianity — the Roman Catholic, the Reformed Evangelical, the Lutheran, and the Unitarian — were recognized by law with equal rights, with penalties for those only who should infringe on the rights of others. Under this broad tolerance Unitarianism, which was indeed largely instrumental in producing it, gained a strong foothold, which, under subsequent persecution, it never wholly lost. Unhappily, the early tolerance was of short duration. The Bishop, Francis David, himself became a martyr to the faith, dying in prison in November, 1579, — an event the tercentenary anniversary of which, in 1879, was celebrated

in the land of his martyrdom. The Unitarians of Transylvania are said to have at one time in the sixteenth century possessed four hundred church buildings and eleven colleges. Through two centuries the iron hand of Austrian and Jesuit oppression nearly dispossessed them of churches, schools, lands, and even of civil as well as religious rights. They were robbed of their churches, which were transferred to the Jesuits.

During the nineteenth century, in 1848, and especially in 1868, they regained their rights and privileges, and something of their former strength. They are reported as having a population of seventy-three thousand, now increasing, with a hundred and fifty churches, a chief college, and a divinity school connected with it, at Kolozsvar, with ten professors and three hundred and seventy-four students; two smaller colleges at Thorda and Sz Keresztur; three periodicals, the "Christian Seed-sower," the "Unitarian Magazine," and the "Woman's World," and many distinguished scholars and literary men, preachers and civilians, in their ranks. Their church government is that of Episcopacy, strongly modified by Congregationalism; and their present bishop is Joseph Ferencz.

As from 1868 Transylvania became united with Hungary, there are now Unitarian congregations at Buda-Pest and at Hodmeis Vaserhely and Vroshaza. A special intimacy of fellowship has recently been cherished and growing between them and the Unitarians of England and America. Several American Unitarians have in recent years made special visits among the Hungarian brethren, and in return Professor John Kovacs, principal of the Kolozsvar College, was present at the Saratoga Conference in 1882, and Professor George Boros at the meetings of the American Unitarian Association, in 1900. A generous gift of $10,000 by the late Mrs. Anna Richmond, of Providence, R. I., has been for many years supporting a professor at the

Kolozsvar College; and by English and American aid the translation of Channing's writings has been published and circulated widely among the people of Hungary of all sects.

10. *England*, though later than the Continent in receiving the Unitarian faith, was visited by Occhino, Socinus, and other Reformers. In 1548 the priest John Ashton was cited to Lambeth for Arian sentiments, and saved his life only by recanting. Under a similar charge occurred several martyrdoms. George Von Parris, a devout German surgeon, for denying the Trinity was burned at Smithfield in 1551, in the brief reign of Edward VI. During the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, Hammond, Lewes, Ket, Wright, and many others met a similar fate. In the reign of James I., in 1611, just as the English Common Version of the Bible was issued, the Unitarian Bartholomew Legate became the last of the Smithfield martyrs; and in 1612, at Lichfield, Edward Wightman, a Unitarian Baptist, was the last martyr burned for heresy in England. In the time of the Commonwealth John Bidle published catechisms of Unitarian doctrine, publicly preached Socinianism, and formed in London the first English Unitarian Church, — thus gaining the title of "Father of the English Unitarians." Yet under the persecution of his time he perished in prison for his faith. In 1640 the Synods of London and York deemed it worth while to issue a special canon against Socinianism, — thus bearing testimony to its popularity and strength; and in 1652 the Racovian Catechism, which had been translated into English and actively circulated, was burned in London. To such strength and influence had Socinianism then grown during the century that in 1655 Dr. Owen writes of it: "The evil is at the door; and there is not a city or town, scarce a village, in England wherein some of this poison is not poured forth." Before the close of the seventeenth century London had houses of Unitarian worship. Milton was an Arian, as has been proved since his

death. Sir Isaac Newton is now known to have written anonymously on the Unitarian side. Locke wrote a work on "The Reasonableness of Christianity," which is substantially Unitarian. The scholarly Lardner, author of "The Credibility of the Gospel History," one of the ablest defences of the Gospels ever written, held Unitarian opinions. That these views had notably invaded the Established Church is testified by Palmer in 1705 writing that there were "troops of Unitarian and Socinian writers, and not a Dissenter among them." Dr. Thomas Evelyn preached the Unitarian faith in Dublin and London.

The Act of Uniformity in 1662 expelled from the Church of England two thousand ministers, mostly Calvinistic Presbyterians. Free from dogmatic tests, many of these ministers and their followers gradually became Arminian, and ultimately Unitarian. After the passage of the Toleration Act in 1689, legalizing nonconformity, the way was opened by which the prevailing faith largely passed into Unitarianism. Half the Unitarian churches in England to-day are of this Presbyterian origin, and largely retain the Presbyterian name and form of church government.

Until 1813 the law made it blasphemy to speak against the Trinity; but a more tolerant public sentiment had long rendered the law a dead letter. Unitarianism as an organized movement was most distinctly initiated by Dr. Theophilus Lindsey, who in 1774 resigned his charge in the Established Church and became pastor of a Unitarian Congregation in Essex Street, London. A still more prominent apostle was the noted Dr. Joseph Priestley. Born in 1733, educated a Calvinist, distinguished for his scholarship and scientific attainments, in 1775 he became pastor of a small Dissenting congregation in Suffolk and a distinguished champion of the humanitarian theology. Believing in the Bible as a divine revelation, and in the miracles as Christ's credentials of authority, while continuing to hold some tenets of Calvinism, he rejected the

Trinity and vicarious atonement as unscriptural; wrote to show how these dogmas came in as later corruptions of primitive Christianity; and held that Christ himself claimed to be simply a man. His theological views, together with his more particularly obnoxious political sentiments during the exciting times of the French Revolution, brought upon him obloquy and persecution; and losing his books, manuscripts, and valuable philosophical instruments at the hands of a mob, he was virtually banished from his native land. In 1792 he removed to America, and gave courses of lectures in Philadelphia, which added fresh stimulus to the rising Unitarianism; but for his closing years he retired to the small neighboring village of Northumberland, where in 1804 he died, and where his remains lie buried.

In 1813 the Unitarians were first placed by law on an equality with other Dissenters. For some years sharp controversy continued as to the proprietary rights in certain church properties held by them, but claimed by Orthodox Dissenters. These claims were finally silenced in favor of the Unitarian occupants by the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844. At the present time there are reported about three hundred Unitarian churches in England, mostly Congregational in church government, and of which one fourth have been formed within the last forty years.

In *Scotland* there are in the larger cities and towns about ten Unitarian churches. In that country occurred the last execution for "blasphemy against the Trinity," in the person of a young student, Thomas Aikenhead, hanged near Edinburgh in 1696. The present Unitarian church of Edinburgh, originally strictly Calvinistic, having adopted the principle of free inquiry, became Arian, and finally humanitarian, under the pastorate of Dr. Southwood Smith in 1812.

In *Ireland*, chiefly in the North, are forty Unitarian churches and a population of about ten thousand, still

Presbyterians in church government. In Wales about thirty-four churches of the faith are reported; and there are several strong societies at Montreal, Toronto, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and other places in the British colonies in Canada, India, South Africa, and Australia.

The English Unitarians maintain a Missionary College in Manchester, a Presbyterian College at Caermarthen which educates Unitarian and Independent ministers, and the larger unsectarian institution of Manchester New College, removed recently to Oxford. In their interest are conducted several weekly religious papers, of which "The Inquirer" and "The Christian Life" are the most important. Their representative missionary society is the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, formed in London, May, 1825. Among the leading writers may be named, besides Priestly, Lindsey, and Belsham, early in the century, more recently, Revs. John James Tayler, Charles Beard, John Hamilton Thom, R. A. Armstrong, Brooke Herford, Stopford A. Brooke, J. Estlin Carpenter, James Drummond, and James Martineau, — the last one of the greatest modern exponents of the higher philosophy of the spirit as opposed to materialism. It may be truthfully added that the forward movement of English Unitarianism is outgrowing the legalism and literalism of a philosophy which narrowed its earlier faith, and is coming to a broader and deeper spirituality.

11. In *America*, free inquiry and open field of thought from the beginning have been favorable to Unitarian views, and the movement for spiritual liberty found special stimulus in the public sentiment following the Revolution. The Pilgrims, bringing to America the parting injunction of their pastor, John Robinson, that there was "more light to break forth from God's Word," organized the first Congregational churches at Plymouth, Salem, and Boston upon covenants so broad and undogmatic that these have required no change in accepting the Unitarian

faith. Without doubt, the prevailing sentiment was mainly Calvinistic at the start, yet with a measure of Arminianism intermingled that grew imperceptibly, until for the last century and a half the progress of Unitarian sentiments may be distinctly traced. Dr. Gay, of Hingham, ordained in 1717, is supposed to have been the first American preacher of Unitarianism. Before the Revolution many lawyers, physicians, tradesmen, and farmers were Unitarians, according to the testimony of the elder President John Adams, himself a Unitarian; and not the laity only, but many of the clergy, prominent among whom was Mayhew, the eloquent preacher of the West Church, Boston. In 1768 the famous Dr. Samuel Hopkins, of Newport, preached a sermon prepared especially against what he deemed the heresy of the Boston ministers. In 1783, under the lead of their young minister, James Freeman, not yet then ordained, the Episcopal church of King's Chapel in Boston expunged from its "Book of Common Prayer" all reference to the Trinity and the worship of Christ, and thus became the first distinctively Unitarian church in America. Its liturgy and church organization continue substantially the same at the present time. Priestley's coming gave fresh impulse to this faith, and the writings of Lindsey and Belsham found their way hither. In a letter to Dr. Lindsey in London, Rev. James Freeman writes that there were "many churches in which the worship was strictly Unitarian, and some of New England's most eminent clergymen openly avow that creed."

In 1801 the oldest Puritan church in America, the original church of the "Mayflower" (established at Plymouth in 1620), under the lead of its young minister James Kendall, by a large majority vote declared itself Unitarian; and with no change in its covenant, using the identical statement of faith drawn up by its Pilgrim founders, it to-day accepts the Unitarian name and fellowship. Free from re-

straints of dogmatic creeds and tests, the New England Congregational churches were especially hospitable to inquiry and progress. By imperceptible degrees changes of opinion came. In 1805 the Unitarian Rev. Dr. Henry Ware was made professor of divinity at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. This fact excited opposition and controversy. In 1815 a controversy between Dr. William Ellery Channing and Dr. Samuel Worcester resulted in open rupture between the Trinitarian and Unitarian Congregationalists. In 1816 the Divinity School at Cambridge was established by Unitarians. Harvard College was in their hands, and chiefly by their influence has maintained the undenominational position which it claims to hold at the present time. For ten years, from 1815 to 1825, the controversy waxed hot; lines of separation were drawn, and men and churches took sides. As the churches divided, the majority prevailing on the one hand or the other carried their name and property to the Trinitarian or Unitarian ranks. Meanwhile the seceding minorities organized anew on the one side or the other. Thus the ancient parishes, each originally co-extensive with the town, were divided; and in many New England towns the oldest church, retaining its ancient Congregational liberty, name, and usages, became and is to-day in faith and fellowship Unitarian.

II. Organization and Present Condition.

1. In America.

During the eventful decade just reviewed (1815–1825), Rev. William Ellery Channing (born in Newport, R. I., 7th April, 1780), then in the prime of manhood, with early ripeness of spiritual fruitage, became by eloquence of tongue and pen the conspicuous leader of the Unitarian movement. At the ordination of Jared Sparks, in 1819, as minister of the Unitarian church in Baltimore, his discourse expounding Unitarian Christianity made a profound impression far and wide. His intense dislike of sectarianism gave to his preaching a special emphasis of individualism and spiritual liberty. Never permitting himself to become a sectarian devotee, to him Unitarianism greatly owes its freedom from sectarian and dogmatic trammels. Less a controversialist than a devout practical preacher, he fearlessly yet reverently sought the truth, brought into prominence the spiritual elements of human nature, subjected religious systems to the test of the soul's best instincts and sentiments, and made it his supreme aim to kindle aspirations for holiness. His testimony was borne chiefly to the fatherhood of God and brotherhood and divine sonship of man, to the worth of human nature and blessedness of human life, to the dignity of labor and the elevation of the working classes, to spiritual freedom and the divine mission and authority of Jesus Christ. He has come to be recognized by all sects as one of the foremost of American preachers and writers, a leading champion of civil and religious freedom, of education and philanthropy, a seeker for truth, a lover of mankind, and a devoted advocate of Christianity. In April, 1880, the centenary of his birth was celebrated in London and in several of the larger cities of America, many persons of other denominations cordially uniting in the tributes of respect; and at the same time was laid the corner-stone of a beautiful

memorial church, soon afterwards completed, at his birthplace, Newport, R. I.

The division of the Church, and consequent separation, was not of Unitarian seeking. The Unitarian leaders were willing in the large fellowship of true Congregationalism and its freedom of an undogmatic faith, to maintain the unity of the Church unbroken. They would have borne their testimony to the truth as they saw it, urging all others freely and honestly to do the same. The necessity of separation was enforced by fellowship withdrawn from them, controverted opinions put forward as tests of church membership, and by charges made that rendered it impossible to stay. After the break had come, it was with no desire to build a new sect or to prolong the bitterness of controversy, it was simply to do their own dutiful part in the great vineyard, that the Unitarians went apart and worked in their own way. But now, as from the first, their attitude has never ceased to be that church unity is to be found, not in identity of opinion, but in personal freedom and in brotherly love; and they have steadily declared their readiness on this broad basis to join in fellowship with all who claim to hold the Christian faith and who prove their discipleship by consistent lives. In the exercise of freedom there have always been within the Unitarian fold varieties of individual opinion, by which we believe the treasury of Christian thought is enriched; while in the same exercise of freedom a few have gone into the Trinitarian household, and others into a position non-Christian or anti-Christian.

On the 24th of May, 1825, was formed in Boston the American Unitarian Association. The first article of its Constitution declares its purpose to be "to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity." It was incorporated in 1848, with the right to hold trust funds, and has at the present time, chiefly received by legacies, over $1,000,000. Without ecclesiastical authority,

it is a purely missionary organization, using annual contributions from the churches — its main resource — for publishing and distributing books and tracts, sustaining missionaries, aiding feeble churches, and planting new ones. Its operations are mainly in the home-field of America; though it has also sent missionaries to India and Japan, and has given aid in Paris, Italy, and Hungary. For forty years its activities were small, the missionary enterprise of the denomination being checked by excessive dread of the sectarian spirit, and the ample benevolent gifts of the people taking more generally the direction of education, and many forms of philanthropy. But ever since 1865, its income has greatly increased, in certain single years exceeding the sum of $100,000, although it by no means receives or distributes all the denominational gifts for religious missionary purposes.

On the 5th of April, 1865, just as the war was closing, a convention, consisting of the pastor and two delegates from each church or parish in the Unitarian fellowship, met in the city of New York and organized a National Conference. The preamble to its constitution was, in 1894, amended to read: "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man. The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims." It is a representative body of pastors and delegates, chosen and meeting biennially, for counsel and fellowship. By it the missionary spirit and enterprise have been greatly stimulated, and since its formation the churches have given more for missionary purposes than in all their previous history. Within

smaller and more convenient territorial districts have been formed also many local or State conferences, with more frequent meetings, which have been successful in fostering fellowship and co-operation, and a more devout and earnest religious life.

Without other ecclesiastical authority, the government of the Unitarian churches and their usages and modes of worship are purely Congregational. The rites of baptism and the Lord's supper are recognized and observed, not as having mystical value or binding authority, but as having practical spiritual worth and influence. The denominational Year-Book for 1905 reports four hundred and sixty churches, of which about two hundred and fifty are in New England, chiefly in Massachusetts; six hundred ministers, twenty-nine local conferences, besides a number of other organizations of purely benevolent aim and purpose. The unsectarian Divinity School of Harvard University has received liberal financial support from Unitarians, and among its alumni numbers many Unitarian ministers. Founded in 1816, it has at present nine professors, three instructors, and a library of 40,000 volumes, students having access also to the College Library with its 600,000 volumes. The Unitarian Theological School at Meadville, Pa., was formed in 1844, and has seven resident professors and three instructors, and 30,000 volumes in its library.

The chief periodicals of the denomination are the "Christian Register," a weekly religious newspaper founded in 1821, and the "Every Other Sunday," a paper for children and Sunday-schools,— both of these published in Boston; also the "Unity," "Old and New," and "Our Best Words," published at the West. The denomination is rich in its literature, especially in the direction of practical and devout religious sentiment. Its writers have produced some of the noblest and sweetest hymns in the English tongue,—conspicuous among which

may be named the universal favorite in all churches, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," written by Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams, of the Unitarian Church in London. The works of Dr. Channing, now widely circulated among English-speaking people all over the world, have been translated entire or in part into the Dutch and German, French, Italian, Swedish, Hungarian, Icelandic, Russian, and Japanese languages.

There may also be mentioned as leading Unitarian preachers and writers, Henry Ware (father and son), James Walker, Theodore Parker, Edmund H. Sears, Orville Dewey, Henry W. Bellows, James Freeman Clarke, William H. Furness, Frederic H. Hedge, Andrew P. Peabody, Edward Everett Hale, Charles C. Everett, Minot J. Savage, Robert Collyer, Francis G. Peabody and Samuel M. Crothers.

Unitarian writers are also largely represented in the realm of history, poetry, and general literature in America as in England. It is believed that Jefferson and Franklin, as well as both Presidents Adams, were Unitarians. Among conspicuous Unitarian writers may be named the poets Bryant, Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell, the historians Bancroft, Prescott, and Motley, and the venerated sage and seer Ralph Waldo Emerson.

It may be added that Unitarian sentiments are held substantially by "Universalists," by many of the "Christians," by "Hicksite Quakers," and by "Progressive Friends."

2. *International.*

The International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers was organized on May 25, 1900, at Boston, in the United States, by foreign delegates and others in attendance on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the American Unitarian Association.

Its purpose is to bring into closer union, for exchange of ideas, mutual service, and the promotion of their common aims, the scattered liberal congregations and isolated thinkers and workers for religious freedom in many lands.

At a meeting in Channing Hall, Boston, called and presided over by Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D.D., President of the American Unitarian Association, addresses favoring the formation of such an international association of Religious Liberals were made; and a committee, consisting of Messrs. Wendte, Bowie, Boros, Hocart, Mozoomdar, and Batchelor, was appointed to prepare a plan of organization.

This Committee reported the following day, May 25, to the reassembled delegates, their recommendations, as follows:

First. That the proposed association be called "The International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers."

Second. That the object of this Council shall be to open communication with those in all lands who are striving to unite pure religion and perfect liberty, and to increase fellowship and co-operation among them.

Third. That the officers of the Council consist of a President and a General Secretary, who, together with an Executive Committee, shall be chosen at each meeting to carry out its objects.

The Committee on organization also recommended that the first general meeting of the Council be held in London in May, 1901, and thereafter every two or three years, and so far as possible in different countries.

The first Congress of the International Council, by invitation of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, was held under their auspices at the end of May, 1901, in London. Fifteen different nationalities and twenty-one different church connections were represented officially or inofficially by those participating. The

attendance at the sessions, held for two days or more, ranged from five hundred to two thousand. A long series of papers and addresses were presented by the President of the Council, Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., of Oxford; Prof. Otto Pfleiderer, D.D., Berlin; Rev. James Drummond, M.A., LL.D., Oxford; Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A., Liverpool; M. Ernest Fontanés, Paris; Rev. F. C. Fleischer, Holland; Prof. Jean Réville, D.D., Paris; Prof. G. Bonet-Maury, D.D, Paris; Rev. James Hocart, Brussels; Prof. Edward Montet, D.D., Geneva; Prof. George Boros, D.D., Hungary; Rev. Tony André, Florence; Prof. B. D. Eerdmans, D.D., Leyden; Rev. C. Schieler, Ph.D., Prussia; Rev. R. H. Cambley, Australia; Mr. Vladimir Tchertkoff, Russia; Mr. Graham Wallas, M.A., London; Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, London; Rev. Stopford Brooke, London; Rev. S. M. Crothers, D.D., Cambridge, Mass.; Rev. Charles W. Wendte, Boston, Mass.

Communications were also received, expressing sympathy with the aims of the Council, from the Protestanten Verein, of Germany, and the Protestanten Bond, of Holland.

All the papers and proceedings of this first session of the International Council in London have been published in a volume procurable from the Unitarian Association of America and England.

The second Congress of the International Council was held, by invitation of the Vergadering van Moderne Theologen, of Holland, an association of liberal ministers, in Amsterdam, Sept. 1 to 4, 1903. Again the meetings were brilliantly successful, the spirit harmonious and enthusiastic. Nearly a thousand paid membership tickets, a delegation of 176 persons from the British Isles, 26 from the United States, and others, representing in all sixteen different religious fellowships, showed the widespread interest in the movement. Dutch, English,

French, and German were the languages used at the Congress. In deference to the large number of English-speaking persons present, all the proceedings were held in that tongue. Printed translations into English and German of a number of the papers were also provided. The Dutch newspapers gave extended and often sympathetic reports of the sessions. Many of the speakers who took part in the London meetings of 1901 participated also in this second Congress, with the addition of Prof. Dr. Otto Pfleiderer and Karl Andresen, of Germany; Rev. G. Schoenholzer, of Zürich; Rev. A. Bourrier, of Sèvres, France; Rev. Drs. S. A. Eliot, J. H. Crooker, and Mr. Edwin D. Mead, of the United States; Rev. N. Jozan, of Hungary; V. R. Shinde, of India; Z. Toyosaki, of Japan; Rev. Drs. H. Oort, P. H. Hugenholtz, T. Cannegieter, T. Van Loenen Martinet, A. Bruining, S. Cramer, Prof. M. A. Gooszen, and others, of Holland.

The proceedings and papers of this second Congress have been issued in a volume of 555 pages, procurable from the American Unitarian Association.

The following constitute the Executive Committee for 1903-5: *Chairman*, Prof. Dr. H. Oort, of Leyden, Holland; *General Secretary*, Rev. C. W. Wendte, Boston, Mass., U. S. A.; Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., Oxford, England; Prof. G. Boros, D.D., Kolozsvar, Hungary; Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, London, England; Prof. B. D. Eerdmans, D.D., Leyden, Holland; Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D.D., Boston, U. S. A.; Prof. E. Montet, Geneva, Switzerland; Prof. J. Réville, D.D., Paris, France; Rev. P. H. Hugenholtz, Jr., Amsterdam, Holland; Prof. Dr. Otto Pfleiderer, Berlin, Germany: and Rev. Gottfried Schoenholzer, Zürich, Switzerland.

III. Doctrinal Views.

In seeking the present form of the Unitarian faith, it is needless to recount the speculations of earlier times. The tenets of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata and Arius, also of Servetus and the Socini, in their special forms sharing the crudities of contemporaneous thought, have largely passed away. However they may interest us, they are not to be quoted as having any authority; they are simply in the line of historical progress, agreeing only in the single fundamental thought that God is one, and Jesus Christ a created and subordinate being. Unitarianism is characteristically not a fixed, dogmatic statement, but a forward movement of ever-enlarging faith. It welcomes inquiry, progress, and diversity of individual thought in the unity of spiritual fellowship; for though truth is eternal, man's apprehension of it grows with his growth. With faith in the unity of God as its key-note, it asserts the unity of all truth in nature, history, experience, and the Bible; the unity of the Church as based on character, not on dogma; and the unity of spiritual life in this world and the next. Its leading principles are, first, the freedom of every individual soul to seek the highest truth and obey it; and second, that character is the test of Christian discipleship. Unitarians declare life, not dogma, to be the essence of Christianity. They deem Christianity to be essentially a reasonable religion, according with the truths of nature, instructing reason, and appealing to it as interpreter and judge. They hold it to be a progressive religion; that its principles, like the axioms of mathematics, are eternally true, but that its germs unfold with the increasing intelligence of mankind. Right belief they deem important for right living; and they emphasize the value of righteousness as establishing the kingdom of God on earth, and as alone fitting the soul for his kingdom above. They refuse

to formulate their belief in fixed creeds of ecclesiastical and exclusive authority, because these never settle open questions, but only start fresh controversy; because they limit inquiry and hinder progress; and because they make dogma instead of character, and opinion instead of spiritual purpose, the bases and tests of fellowship.

Yet while refusing to stereotype any authoritative creed-statement, there is an unwritten consensus of faith in which Unitarians substantially agree. They believe in the one God as the Creator of the Universe and Father of all souls, — a Father who wills man's welfare, desiring that not even the least shall perish; the Fatherly Friend in all worlds, who does not wait for forgiveness and favor to be purchased, but freely pours forth blessing on all who will accept it; Father of the sinner as of the saint, seeking every wanderer with his pursuing love, and punishing the erring, not for his own pleasure, but for their profit, that they may become partakers of his holiness. Unitarians believe in man as naturally neither saint nor sinner; that his nature is not fallen, corrupt, and ruined, but undeveloped and incomplete; that he inherits tendencies to good as well as to evil, and that he is sinful only as he knowingly and wilfully does wrong; that he needs regeneration, the unfolding and renewal of his spiritual nature, which he experiences through obedience to the truth, under that divine influence which is called the Holy Spirit; that as a child of the Infinite, allied to the Supreme Goodness by ties that cannot be sundered, having in him a spark of divinity that renders his ultimate redemption an inextinguishable hope, he yet needs to be taught and inspired of God; but with the aid of the divine grace, which is his birthright, he is able to climb the celestial summits. Unitarians believe in Jesus Christ as the four Evangelists describe him, — as Son of God and Son of man. They care little for metaphysical speculations about the mystery of his nature, but emphasize his word and life as

a practical help for human salvation. They hold that he is our Saviour as he becomes to us the Light of the World, the Fountain of Living Water, and the Bread of Life, — our Saviour by illustrating the eternal principles of right, inspiring his followers to holiness, and imparting to them the true life more abundantly; our Saviour so far as he leads and helps us to be large-hearted, truth-seeking, pure, loving, and devout; that he came into the world to bear testimony to the truth, and was here not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and that he proved himself to be humanity's rightful lord and leader by his divine helpfulness. In short, while not accepting the dogma of his divine personality as deity, they believe in his divinity as that divine quality of character that would render all souls sons and daughters of God. Under the influence of elevated views of man's spiritual nature, affirming his innate power of apprehending and obeying religious truth, Unitarianism in declaring the humanity of Jesus does not bring the Christ down, but lifts humanity up. It asserts that Jesus was purely human, only to show that human nature itself is, in the phrase of Athanasius, *homo-ousian*, — of the same substance with God; and that Jesus is the best expression of that divine humanity which is the birthright and God-ordained destiny of all souls. While they are jealous of ecclesiastical authority or dictation, and perpetually refuse to limit their fellowship by formula, the Unitarians have in public assembly of the American Unitarian Association, and in representative meetings of their National and Local Conferences, repeatedly reaffirmed their attitude of Christian discipleship, and declared that they hold themselves to be a body of believers upon the Christian foundation and within the Christian Church. They deem the mind of Christ to be the best index of Christianity. For the sources of Unitarian thought, therefore, they refer to Unitarian literature and life, especially to the Scriptures of the New Testament, among which they

give precedence to the Four Gospels, as embodying the word and life of Jesus Christ; and believing in the universal inspiration of the Church of the living God, their ultimate authority is reason, enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2 00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

PIONEERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Being the Great and Thursday Lectures Delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three

Size, 5 1-2 x 8 inches; pages, 396; price, $1.50 *net*; postage, 13 cents.

THE purpose and scope of this volume cannot be better shown than by giving the subjects and authors of the thirteen chapters which make up its contents. These are: I. "William Brewster and the Independents," by Edwin D. Mead; II. "Roger Williams and the Doctrine of Soul Liberty," by W. H. P. Faunce; III. "Thomas Hooker and the Principle of Congregational Independency," by Williston Walker, IV. "William Penn and the Gospel of th Inner Light," by Benjamin B. Trueblood; V. "Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Democracy on Religion," by Thomas R. Slicer; VI. "William Ellery Channing and the Growth of Spiritual Christianity," by William W. Fenn; VII. "Horace Bushnell and Progressive Orthodoxy," by Washington Gladden; VIII. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," by John Coleman Adams; IX. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Teaching of the Divine Immanence," by Francis G. Peabody ; X. "Theodore Parker and the Naturalization of Religion," by James Eells; XI. "Phillips Brooks and the Unity of the Spirit," by Samuel A. Eliot.

The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 72]

CO-OPERATION FOR HOLINESS.

BY

REV. JOSEPH HENRY CROOKER.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity: and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

CO-OPERATION FOR HOLINESS.

When the village fire-bell rings, the alarm which it sounds brings every citizen to a full consciousness of a common danger, and an instantaneous effort is made by all to put out the fire. No one stops to consider whether the man whose house is in flames is a Jew or a Gentile, rich or poor, saint or sinner, believer or unbeliever. In that moment the instinct of humanity asserts itself; and brushing aside all the superficial distinctions and all the ecclesiastical prejudices which rule our daily routine of life, it marshals every person in one great effort to suppress a common danger. In that critical hour men work vigorously side by side as *men*, no one stopping to think whether his neighbor has been sprinkled or immersed, whether he believes in the deity or only the humanity of Jesus. And if a Baptist or a Unitarian refused to work with another man because that neighbor believed differently about predestination or probation, he would cover himself with the contempt of the community.

When the village school-bell rings out from all the homes round about, the children start with a common purpose towards a common temple of learning. The mother's darling and the father's pride go forth from squalid hut and elegant mansion. From modest houses made beautiful by the refined and noble character of their occupants, from elegant residences made desolate by devouring greed or destructive sensuality, from homes full of prayerfulness, and from homes full of frivolity, — the children gather in the school-house to sit side by side, to study

the same books and to drink the water of life from the same fountain. This clarion call of Wisdom, rung by the school-bell, is not addressed to Methodist or Lutheran, neither to believers nor even Christians is it sent; but to the sons and daughters of man It is the imperial summons of that *truth* which is as catholic as Nature and as unsectarian as God. Moreover, it is proclaimed with equal urgency and directness to every child; and in that schoolroom we have an anticipation of the kingdom of heaven. The beliefs of each tiny infant are respected, no child being allowed to illtreat his neighbor on account of differences of religious faith: while all children sit there side by side in the sacred fellowship of education, studying and reciting together as members of one family, not indifferent to religion, and not destitute of religious convictions, yet the right of each soul to its own private opinion is by all held sacred. Among these children in the schoolroom the Dayspring from on high begins to dawn towards a universal recognition of the unity of humanity. They are learning to know each other, not as Irish or German, not as Trinitarian or Unitarian, but as *human beings*. Also, they are learning how unsectarian Truth and Goodness are; and I believe that if Jesus of Nazareth walked among men to-day, he would straightway go into the schoolroom and say: "Here more than anywhere else is my Gospel lived."

But when the schoolhouses are closed; when the peace of the Sabbath morning has spread its hush over the country-side, and the village church-bells ring, — then what a remarkable change occurs! The two neighbors who worked side by side the night before to put out the fire hurry off to churches which refuse to unite in a common effort to put out the fires of intemperance which are destroying our youth; while children who study and play together on week-days are told by their respective pastors that their companions are surely on the broad

road to perdition. These church-bells produce in men and women the feeling that they are first of all Baptists or Methodists or Lutherans, — so that on Sunday morning artificial and irritating lines of division are tightly drawn; men dress themselves in garments of exclusiveness never worn on the market or in the social circle; and the boy whose loved seat-mate at school the year round is a Jew, carries under his arm a Sunday-school lesson-paper which declares that all such unbelieving Jews shall be forever damned. The fire-bell called aloud: "Come, every man, and subdue the common danger;" the school-bell rang out: "Come, every child, to the temple of wisdom, and grow strong and noble;" but the church-bells call: "You who are immersed, come hither and pray by yourselves; you who believe in election, worship here; you who belong to the one, true, apostolic, Episcopal Church, gather here." And in the reverberation of each church-bell we hear the sad undertone of the damnatory clauses of the creeds: "Those who do not so believe, God will turn into hell."

The fire-bell arouses men to the sense of a common humanity, and the response to its alarm is instant and universal. But is a man on fire with a passion for drink, or blinded by ignorance, less worthy a united effort on the part of the whole community than a burning dwelling? Is there any reason why men should be more exclusive and less inclined to co-operate with each other in their work for the suppression of the moral and spiritual dangers which menace society than in their work against fire and flood and epidemic? The secular school-bell proclaims the unity of humanity and shows forth the Fatherhood of God; but the church-bells make people forget their identity of origin and destiny, by gathering them within high-fenced folds into which no person can enter except upon profession of faith in certain theological notions. *But is there any reason why we should hold*

dogma so dear and manhood so cheap? Is there any reason why religion should break up that fellowship, founded upon humanity, which exists in commerce and society? Is there any reason why men who are good enough to associate with in every other relation should be called unworthy of church membership? Is there any reason why men who co-operate in behalf of the interests of education should refuse to co-operate for holiness? Is there any reason why you should demand belief in the Trinity at the church-door of those whom you gladly welcome at your fireside? Is there any reason why that manhood which entitles a person to membership in your secret order or social club should be spurned as insufficient by our religious organizations? Is there any reason why, when the church-bell rings, you should turn away in abhorrence from your Unitarian or Jewish friend, with whom you have loved to converse, denying him religious fellowship and church communion, and assenting when the minister declares that all such shall be lost everlastingly?

I would not for a moment contend that separate churches are an evil, or that numerous forms of religious service are necessarily harmful. Every community is composed of various classes, who have different inheritances, tastes, and capacities. Some are more impressed by a stately and gorgeous ritual. Some worship best amidst more quiet surroundings and simpler forms. Emotional temperaments crave a religious service full of fervor, unction, and picturesque preaching; while more intellectual persons, who would be repelled by such sentimentalism, are best served by an administration of religion which is more rational and educational. Differences of constitution and training necessitate different religious organizations. But the existence of different churches need not mean bigotry and intolerance, nor is it necessary that diversities of belief should lead different churches to work against each other.

The church-bells so often sound the signal of division and strife because each church gathers people into a company which is more or less intolerant towards all other sects. But church-bells may ring in harmony as well as in dissonance, and each church may mark simply *a different post of duty* rather than what is claimed as the *one portal to heaven.* The trouble is not, primarily, that there are too many churches, or even that they differ so widely in policy and faith, but that they are organized upon a false basis, and are led by that very fact to work against each other. No traveller into a far country on a sultry day ever complains that there are too many shade-trees by the roadside; but if a guardian stood under each tree, throwing stones towards the next tree and refusing to let any one enjoy the shade of his own tree unless he professed a certain belief, it is probable that a great many travellers would take to the middle of the road and try their chances there, — just as many good men have left the churches and taken to the common highway of humanity.

Our chief complaint, then, is not that there are too many churches, — though there are undoubtedly too many sects represented in our towns and villages, — but that churches are not properly organized; that religious fellowship is so interpreted and exercised that it destroys the unity of humanity, while it wastes the forces which ought to be making for righteousness. Our co-operation for holiness is not sufficiently humane and catholic; it keeps too close to superficial distinctions, while it follows a policy which is radically wrong, because it makes opinion more important than life. When I look into the faces of the men and women who crowd the streets in the neighborhood of a Catholic church early Sunday morning, I always say to myself, but in no self-righteous spirit: "I am sure that I could not enjoy the form of worship which appeals most powerfully to these persons, and I am glad that a church exists which can do them good, even if it has

no message for me." When I enter a ritualistic Episcopal church and note the dignity and order of the service, the propriety of attitude and the heartiness of ceremony; when I recognize that the boy choir, processional, and altar furniture, though meaningless, if not repulsive to me, do undoubtedly minister to the devout, — I feel glad that there is a church which truly benefits certain temperaments, and ministers unto those whom I could not reach. Therefore I am glad to see enough churches to accommodate these distinct classes which stand at different levels of intellectual attainment and æsthetic cultivation, and which are only accessible by different instrumentalities. What I find to *condemn* is both the assumption of each that it alone is the *true church*, and also the consequent unwillingness of each to co-operate with others in a common cause against vice, ignorance, and injustice. I have no fault to find with any man who strives to worship according to his peculiar tastes and convictions; but when he rules out as heretical all forms of worship besides his own, and refuses to co-operate in humane and educational enterprises with those who worship in some other way, then, speaking in behalf of the universal Brotherhood of Man, I condemn his course as harmful and retrogressive.

Now what makes the sound of the church-bell a signal of division, and what leads to so much strife in religion, is the fact that dogma has been given undue importance and made the basis of church fellowship. Religion has wrongfully associated people in loyalty to an opinion, whereas it ought to have associated them in co-operation for holiness. *A false theory of religious organization* has destroyed the peace of society and the brotherhood of humanity. A church has but one true purpose or reason for existence, — *to unite men in a common effort to bring in the kingdom of God.* The sole mission of the church is to make the will of God

prevail among men, to associate them for worship, edification, and helpfulness. And every earnest man and woman ought to be included there and set at work. The true basis of worship is not identity of doctrine, but sensitiveness of feeling to beauty, mystery, and sublimity. The true bond of union for spiritual cultivation is not belief, but aspiration. The true spirit of helpfulness springs from the heart rather than the head. The foundation on which to build a church is not doctrine, but desire for holiness. The motive to which we ought to appeal is not love of heaven, but sympathy for man. The interrogation which should meet every man at the church-door ought to be, not, "What do you believe?" but, "What are you willing to do?" The arms of the church ought to be stretched out, not simply to welcome those who are willing to subscribe its confession, but rather to welcome those who are anxious to minister to every one in need. The simple demand of Jesus was this: "Follow me;" that is, "Go about doing good."

It is a misfortune that our churches make it unnecessarily difficult for people to be religious in any public way or by any organic methods. When I visit our villages, where the problems of religion lie before us in their native simplicity, I am often reminded of the words of Jesus, spoken to the unworthy Pharisees of his time: "Ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne." The ritualists of that day made it very difficult for men to be religious; there were so many petty ceremonies to be observed, so many trivial commandments to keep, so many artificial forms to obey. The native religious disposition of man was not taken for granted, and no confidence was placed in human nature. Nothing was left for man to do in the freedom of his will or the spontaneity of his love, but everything was mapped out for him. To live religiously, as religion was understood, became a most tiresome and burdensome formality. And religion was made hard, not

because such great things were demanded of man, but because so many little things were required of him.

I find to-day in many respects a similar condition of affairs. The village church does not make religion too hard by demanding too much, but by demanding the wrong things. The church cannot lift up too high an ideal of life. The higher its standard, the more attractive its message. It cannot demand too much philanthropy: the more it appeals to human sympathy, the quicker will be the response. It cannot create too many activities for self-help: the more it gives men to do, the faster it will grow. Religious organizations, like all others, *must grow by working.* The church does not and cannot make religion too difficult in this way. What I find is this: In every village into which I go, the ministers make it impossible for a very large number of our best people to join the church. What do I mean? I mean that everywhere a large proportion of the best men and women are kept away from its service and activities because the church insists that they must subscribe its creed before being admitted as members; it insists on forcing a notion upon men against their reason, instead of marshalling them in co-operation for holiness. Now, man is naturally religious; he seeks association, he wants to do something for his fellow-men, he loves activity and comradeship; but many cannot comply with the conditions of membership laid down by the church, and as a result, they remain outside as unchurched.

Go, if you will, into almost any town, and look over the list of upright, intelligent, influential men, — the men whose word is as good as their bond, who are sought as trustees and guardians, who are foremost in public spirit and benevolent enterprises. You will find that a very large proportion of them are not church-members. Many do not go to church at all; some attend out of respect for their families; while others subscribe their money, but seldom

attend any religious service except a funeral. The fact as plain as day to the unprejudiced mind is this: that the very men who for character and intelligence have a first-class standing, and who, in view of ability and influence, ought to be rulers in Israel and pillars in the house of God, — these persons not only have comparatively little to do with church affairs, but not seldom look with some contempt upon religion as organized in their midst. There are good and intelligent people in all the churches; but the striking fact is that so many of the good and intelligent members of almost every community are indifferent to the churches, or are only nominally attached to them. Now these unchurched people as a rule are not indifferent to the moral interests of society, nor are they unwilling to labor for high aims. If you should ask them why they are not church-members, nine out of ten would reply: "I believe in religion and in churches, but I cannot subscribe the creed. I would go to church oftener, but when I do go, I am told that those who believe as I do will be damned, — which is not pleasant or inspiring information, and so I conclude that it is best to stay at home."

This is what I call making it hard for men to be religious. When the church insists that a man must accept certain dogmas or remain without and be classed with blasphemers, the way of salvation is made unnecessarily difficult. Ask these persons to contribute money for a lecture course, and they respond generously. Open a subscription for yellow-fever sufferers, and their names head the list. Call on them to care for the sick, and their service is unremitting. Give them any task that looks towards good morals or the common welfare, and it is done. Every one of them would be in the church in less than ten days if they were simply asked to lend a helping hand and try to live a better life. But they say: "I cannot believe this and that dogma, and so I must keep out." The church does not allow them to be religious upon the broad

basis of a desire for holiness, and so they wander about unorganized and without a shepherd. This is the condition of thousands of men in our nation to-day who are able and noble citizens, and this is a condition which is unfortunate both for them and also for the community in general. Therefore I contend that there must be something wrong with a method of religious organization which by its practical workings excludes so many good and efficient persons from its fellowship, and which also makes it so difficult for many thinking men to co-operate heartily with the existing churches.

And the over-emphasis of dogma is making it every day more difficult for men to be church-members, not only because the growing light of the time reveals more and more imperfections in the creeds, but because men trained in the scientific spirit are more and more disinclined to commit themselves to fixed opinions respecting speculative subjects. As long as churches stand primarily for a theological creed, church-bells will ring in dissonance rather than in harmony, for opinions must differ; *and people will be kept apart by any policy which places doctrinal conformity above goodness of heart.* And so long as churches condition their fellowship upon creed-subscription, many will find it impossible to become church-members, and a large proportion of the community most zealous for holiness will be ruled out simply because the modern intellect will rather have *freedom without association, than a religious fellowship conditioned upon servitude to Calvin or any other dogmatist.* But this alienation is both unfortunate and absolutely needless. There is no valid reason why we should not have both *religious co-operation* and *intellectual freedom* united in one administration of spiritual affairs.

From the fact that religious fellowship has been so long conditioned upon belief, many are inclined to see nothing but an instigation of the Evil One in this proposition

to make a spiritual purpose rather than a speculative dogma the basis of church organization. Some exclaim: "Shall we throw aside our faith in God and immortality, and let men believe just as they please, while we write over our altars: 'This church stands for nothing in particular'?" But no such result would follow from the policy proposed. What holds men to faith in God and immortality is not the *church creed*, but the *experience of life*. Writing your dogma in the church-book will no more compel men to believe in God than writing a good maxim in your child's copy-book will make him moral. Let us have some confidence in human nature and the integrity of the universe.

The primary truths of religion need no such help as that given by church creeds. The banker does not make his new clerk promise under oath to believe the multiplication-table. Mathematical truths need no such fictitious supports. And is not the truth of religion as able to stand alone as the multiplication-table? We may take it for granted that any company of people gathered together to cultivate holiness will believe in God; and the best way to make them believe more in God is to set them at work in love for humanity. Moreover, an organization based upon such a spiritual purpose will not have to spend much time in defining and declaring its purpose. That will be plain enough from its spirit and work. No man has to write a description of his character on his hat-band. His neighbors know all about that. There are those who are forever asking that some statement of faith be adopted, that the world may know what they represent. But no such statement of belief can adequately describe essential religion or vital piety. If the minister has a real gospel, and the church any consecration, the purpose of that religious movement will be understood well enough. *Publish what you are by what you do!* The minister who is so over-anxious to have a little creedlet to define

his position, does not fully understand the word of God. *The Alps are in need of no definition.* Have some Alpine convictions. They will lead you to a work which will define your faith as no feeble words can. Shed love as the sun sheds light, and you will need no graven tablets to inform the world that you represent the living God. When a company of earnest people associate themselves and begin to do something for humanity, their position and purpose are plain enough. When we drop the creed as a condition of fellowship, and make a spiritual purpose, expressed in the spirit of one's life rather than in words, the basis of organization, we do not thereby drop belief in God, for that is rooted in each soul. The course proposed is simply changing the policy of the church from the defence of a dogma to the cultivation of holiness, in order that every earnest man may unite in its duties and felicities.

Others charge that a creedless church will lead to intellectual confusion in matters of religion, — that is, if we throw away dogma and make a desire for holiness the condition of membership, there will be no longer any clear thinking or definite ideas. Here again the influence of what is simply written down is vastly over-estimated. Calvinism did stand for vast intellectual vigor as long as it was carried in the soul as a living system of thought. Its intellectual power then lay, however, in the fact that it was a vital culture rather than a written creed. But in recent times Calvinistic confessions have led to mistiness of thought, because in trying to harmonize them with modern culture men have been obliged to resort to the vague and the ambiguous. If you want a man to reach clearness and vigor of thought, do not set him to defend a dogma, where he must cultivate special pleading and resort to stultifying apologetics, but turn him towards the discovery of truth, and inspire him with a supreme desire for *reality*. The very clearest thinking

to-day is done by scientists, whose chief ambition is to *outgrow* old opinions. The only way to insure intellectual strength and clearness in the pulpit is to put there the best-cultivated men to be found, give them freedom to grow, and demand of them the best that they can do, regardless of traditional opinions. The foundation of intellectual vigor is sincerity and earnestness, and a church full of the love of liberty and the spirit of humanity will out-rank all others in clearness of thought.

Our conclusion then is that the only true basis for religious organization is a spiritual purpose. Religion will take on new vigor and win unexpected victories just as soon as it aims first of all to associate men in co-operation for holiness rather than for the maintenance of a dogma. The church ought to welcome to its fellowship every person who wants to be a better child of God and who desires to make others better. Goodness is a great deal more important than mere opinion; and the church ought to be an organic expression of this truth.

I. This is the *most practical basis*. It is the only basis in harmony with the modern spirit and conducive to the unity of humanity. As long as you condition fellowship upon any dogma, so long you will necessarily exclude a large number of persons who are most truly religious and who are best able to serve the church. Two facts are as clear as day: (1) equally good people cannot believe alike; (2) every man anxious to bring in the kingdom of God ought to be in the church: and the only way to include all those who are willing to work for righteousness is to make our basis a purpose rather than a dogma. Principal Tulloch wisely wrote: "Unity can never come from dogma, as our forefathers unhappily imagined. Dogma splits rather than unites, from its very nature." And the only remedy for that appalling religious destitution which afflicts our towns and villages must be found in a *radical reorganization* of the church on just this line. No fantastic device for

carrying the Gospel to the masses ; no new ritual or strange ceremonial ; no revised business policy ; no unctuous sensationalism or theatrical pulpit performances, — none of these things will make religion a supreme power, where now it merely drags out a miserable existence by the aid of oyster-suppers and unprofitable fairs. Neither will any superficial restatement of the creed work a cure. To go to the root of the difficulty, we must give the church a *new constitution and policy*. We must create an administration of religion as wide as the moral and humane needs of humanity, and make the church a place where every right-minded person will find it easy to co-operate for holiness. And there is still another important consideration in this connection : Nothing will do away with that subdivision of forces and waste of energy brought about by the over-emphasis of dogma, which splits every community into numerous churches, each too weak to do anything but barely live and support a feeble preacher, — nothing will remedy this religious destitution of our villages but a new policy which will mass the army of the Lord together for works of righteousness rather than for the defence of opinions. We need one or two churches where there are now six or eight, in order that religion may have some organic vigor, and be represented by a man of commanding ability and exalted character. And when the church takes this stand and asks men to engage, in a large spirit, in something really worth doing, there will be a re-birth of Christianity which in grandeur of results will far surpass the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

II. This is the *most efficient policy*. We need a method of religious organization which will call forth the quickest response and take the deepest hold of the largest number of people. A church based upon a creed necessarily addresses the intellect first of all, in order to win its assent rather than to quicken its activities. But even when that assent is gained, the man may not be moved to any heroic con-

duct, or even endowed with any valuable information. If, however, a church stands primarily for holiness, and appeals to pity and sympathy and aspiration, then its plea will touch the springs of action. A call for *helpers* reaches farther and penetrates deeper than a call for *believers;* and that church will touch men with largest inspiration which organizes men for helpfulness.

III. This is the *most spiritual position.* A church ought to be a mint coining human life into character, rather than opinion. It is more spiritual to work for holiness of life than for uniformity of belief. It is more spiritual to associate two men together to help a third out of sorrow or vice than simply to get two men together to recite a creed. It is more spiritual to bring all earnest-minded men together in one common effort for higher manhood than to condition our fellowship upon a dogma which will rule out half the community. I have not a word to say in this place against belief in the triune nature of the Godhead or the supernatural character of Jesus, any more than I have against the nebular hypothesis, which is as much a part of vital piety as many of the so-called essentials of belief, while I place a high value upon positive convictions; but I hold that a religious organization which unites the very last man to be reached in an effort to wipe away tears and sow gladness, is engaged in a more spiritual mission than one which stands primarily for belief in the Westminster Confession.

Religious association — fellowship in spiritual things for humane ends, co-operation for holiness — is one of the commanding necessities of our human nature and one of the imperative needs of society. Every man owes this much to himself, — that he avail himself of every educational agency. And there is a refinement of spirit, a quickness of feeling, a breadth of sympathy, a wealth of motive power, which come to us only as we commune and labor together. Every man owes this much to humanity, — that he give himself

heartily to the universal interests of society. And there are evils which can be overcome only as men work together for their suppression. There are felicities which can be enjoyed only as men are united in common hopes and aspirations. We need to draw continually upon the communal life which lies stored up in a living religious organization, while we need to grow by contributing our love and hope to the common reservoir of social forces. We have moments of depression and weakness when we need the uplift and tonic which are imparted by contact with a company of fellow-men bowed in worship and engaged in philanthropy. We have seasons of joy and exhilaration when it is our duty to contribute by active co-operation to the fund of sympathy and reverence which is needed to operate the social organism. No man is so safe and no man is so happy as he who is at work in some corporate capacity for the higher life of humanity. Every person is under solemn obligation to associate himself with others for religious fellowship. And just because religious fellowship is so divine and so necessary, and just because the need of united efforts for holiness is so great, we plead that religious fellowship and organization be disassociated from dogma and placed upon a more humane and spiritual basis, and we join with Max Müller in the hope, — "I conceive a *templum serenum* where shall meet in that love of truth, which at bottom is but one of the forms of love of God, all men of upright heart and pure will."

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

By Joseph H. Crooker

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 216; price, $1.00 *net;* postage, 10 cents.

A THOROUGH and painstaking research into the status of religious education in its present connection with and its proper relation to, our various institutions of learning, from the public school to the great university. The religious motive in its relation to popular education is fully examined; and the present conditions and recent changes in religious instruction and freedom of worship in denominational institutions, normal schools, agricultural colleges, and State universities, receive special treatment in chapters of much significance, where are traced the gradually growing liberal tendencies in prescribed religious requirements. One of the most valuable and instructive portions of the volume is given to an account of some interesting experiments in the way of enlarged religious freedom made in recent years by some of our largest universities, through their altered attitude toward the problem of the religious culture of their students. All of this extremely suggestive material is brought to a practical close by a clear and comprehensive array of conclusions and recommendations.

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By James T. Bixby

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

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[No. 73]

The Unitarian Church

In Its Relations with Other Protestant Churches

BY

Rev. HOWARD N. BROWN

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
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Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

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THE UNITARIAN CHURCH

In its Relations with Other Protestant Churches.

BY REV. HOWARD N. BROWN.

The most obvious thing to say of these relations is that they are, in any particular case, very much what the parties concerned may choose or chance to make of them. Quarrels grow out of the minds of quarrelsome people, and they who want peace can generally get it at no greater expense of patience and perseverance than is required to purchase other of life's blessings. Where the relations between neighboring churches are distinctly hostile or unfriendly, the original fault may lie on either side. Those representing the older faith may combine to crush out what they regard as a dangerous heresy planted in their midst, or the Unitarian Church may consider itself appointed by Heaven to bring home to other organizations the charge of idolatry and superstition. In all such cases, however, it takes at least two to make the quarrel. If other churches go calmly about their business (having legitimate business to do), they are sure to make the attacks of a waspish critic appear ridiculous at last; and the Unitarian Church, which bears with dignity the false accusations urged against it, will win from bigotry itself, in the end, some measure of respect and friendly regard.

In other words there is nothing in the situation we have here to consider which destroys the efficacy of the laws that govern all human intercourse. Difficulties and disagreements exist everywhere; but in ecclesiastical, as in other affairs, peace and co-operation are always within reach when on both sides there is a disposition to seek such relations. Even when that disposition exists on one side only, the church which bears itself like one entitled to respect can almost cer-

tainly compel from others respectful treatment. Still, it would be idle to pretend that Unitarian churches stand on equal footing with others in ability to make terms of fellowship with those about them. On the contrary, a special disability rests upon them, the size and importance of which it is of some consequence to estimate aright, not making too much or too little of this bar to Christian union.

To begin with an exaggeration which seems to be much in the minds of those with whom we could desire to establish a better mutual understanding, it is often charged that Unitarianism set out to destroy Orthodoxy, and is, therefore, by the very nature of its being, a persistent and implacable foe to the prevailing type of Protestant Christianity. They who make this charge are able to quote sayings of Unitarian authorship struck out in the heat of controversy which furnish, to their own minds at least, sufficient evidence of its truth. Perhaps, also, there are Unitarians who hold the same idea of an "irrepressible conflict," and order their behavior toward others on that basis. But this view is nevertheless a gross exaggeration of the truth, and there is no such fatal obstacle to friendly relations between our churches and others as it would imply.

Something, without doubt, Unitarianism set out to destroy, or at all events to war against without ceasing; but that something was not any set of religious opinions. It is rather the use that is made of certain beliefs in the Church and the rank to which they are assigned. Its charge against the Church is not that it believes thus and so, which in its judgment is false and wrong, but that in the name of these beliefs it shuts the door of Christian fellowship in the face of men and women who, by any test of usefulness, intelligence, or character are abundantly entitled to entrance.

Take, for example, what appears to be the fundamental difference in doctrine. Unitarianism is no more committed to warfare against belief in the Trinity than Baptists are committed to disfellowship those who practise baptism by sprinkling, and everybody knows that the controversy over that point long since died out. It is matter of record that the early Unitarians in New England made very little attempt to convert others to their way of thinking, claiming only the right to hold their own opinions on one of the deep prob-

lems of the religious life. Lack of proselyting zeal has always remained one of the characteristic features of the movement. No picture of us is more often held up as an awful example and impressive warning to check tendencies in our direction than that of a people sadly lacking in missionary enterprise. Surely, that ought not to be the habit of mind of an organization which "set out to destroy Orthodoxy." In fact, Unitarianism began as rather a peaceful, contemplative, and scholarly movement. This is what it still is, essentially, to the immense disgust of some of its friends. The notion of it as a vindictive and warlike influence is nothing but a caricature.

We have no interest which should lead us to interfere in the least with those who find comfort or help or strength through their belief in the Trinity. Any pretence on our part that this belief was so false and pernicious, so much a spring of evil in the world as to justify a crusade against it, would be manifestly absurd. If any one wants to engage in friendly debate, we are generally quite ready for the encounter; but we do not regard it as a vital matter that others should believe as we do. Our point is that the beliefs of others are of less consequence than they sometimes suppose, not that they are dreadful wrongs against reason and humanity which we are commissioned to set right.

What is vital in our sight is that the human mind should have liberty to follow after the clearest truth it can perceive. We protest that it is for the Church the worst policy imaginable to cut off from itself all those intellectual forces of the time which have no vital belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. When misrepresentation and abuse are resorted to, to prevent people from thinking along certain lines, we declare that to be prejudicial to the world's best interests. The truth itself cannot afford to win by such tactics. Unitarians, as a rule, betray no consciousness of a mission to instruct mankind at large in all matters of doctrine and practice; but they honestly consider themselves worthy to associate on equal terms with most orthodox Christians of their acquaintance, and, finding themselves regarded as if they were spiritually "unclean," that reveals to them a state of things which it is of some consequence to all concerned to have amended.

The point cannot be too clearly or too strongly stated that the Unitarian attack is primarily delivered, not against doctrines, but against the use made of these doctrines as a test of membership and fellowship in the Church. Salvation by character is one of the chief watchwords of the movement; and this means that all beliefs, orthodox or otherwise, should be held of secondary importance, when weighed against the life.

There is, therefore, no "war to the knife" between the Unitarian Church and other churches, except so far as it is part of the creed of the latter that, no matter what a man is, or what he does, in order to be saved his intellectual nature must be cut to a certain required pattern. Of course, when people believe that others must think exactly their thoughts in order to gain entrance to the kingdom of heaven, it is an offence if they are told that their ideas are not so exactly and eternally true as they suppose. Enlightened Orthodoxy, however, as we understand it, does not take this attitude. That contents itself with declaring that the Trinitarian formula embodies the most reasonable view of the nature of Deity. As to that, we have much to say; but it can all wait while we put this other question,— Is this view so overwhelmingly certain and important that you must needs refuse to recognize those who cannot honestly hold it as being among the followers of Christ? Wherever that question is answered in the affirmative, there is a battle between our churches and others which, beyond all shadow of question, we shall ultimately win. To-day there are many churches nominally orthodox which have outgrown such narrowness of spirit. Between them and us there ought to be, and no doubt will be in time, as much good will as binds together any of the different branches of the Church. At present there is some misunderstanding on both sides. Notably, there is the exaggeration of which we have spoken, that Unitarianism exists only to smite and slay orthodox beliefs. Such foolish ideas will soon disappear from the minds of thinking people, and meanwhile some backward Unitarians will acquire better information in regard to recent changes in the orthodox world.

Unenlightened Orthodoxy (we are sorry to be able to use no other term) is still bound, we suppose, to regard with horror any suggestion that its opinions about Christ come

short of being an exact copy of the Master's mind. Its rooted and fixed disfavor manifested toward us has to be accepted and endured as one accepts a disagreeable east wind. No remedy can be found save through the slow growth and spread of a broader intelligence. This will convince people at last that they have not seen the whole of God's truth, and that, where the fruits of righteousness are displayed, it is well to be sparing in condemnation of the life out of which they spring.

How far it is worth while in face of these difficulties to strive for amicable relations with other churches is a question which involves some consideration of what is at stake. What influence the Unitarian Church has had and may continue to have on other representatives of the Christian faith will be set forth in other articles belonging to this series. Here it must suffice to say that, in so far as we have a message to others, it is of much importance to win from them so much friendly interest that they will listen to what we have to say. It should also be said that for its own sake Unitarianism needs, as much as possible, to get off its "reservation," and find some sympathetic touch with the outside religious world.

We have spoken thus far only of "orthodox" churches as related to ourselves, because that is where the most serious problems lie. It should go without saying that the relations between our churches and liberal movements under other names promise to become better and better year by year. No close organic union of these separate bodies, so far as we can see, is probable or desirable; but they will more and more learn to work side by side with the heartiest good will and mutual esteem.

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THE UNITARIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THEOLOGY

BY

Rev. SAMUEL M. CROTHERS, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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The Brotherhood of Man.
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Modern Unitarianism is continually misapprehended by those from whom intelligent sympathy might be expected. Broad Churchmen, when expounding their own progressive ideas, are usually careful to declare that they are not moving in the direction of the Unitarian heresy. On the other hand, many independent thinkers, when emphasizing their belief in a free religion, find it necessary to declare that they are outside the limits of the Unitarian sect.

It is taken for granted that Unitarianism is coldly intellectual, and that it is altogether critical in its method and controversial in its attitude. Those who have rationalized and spiritualized the doctrine of the Trinity till it would be unrecognized by Athanasius seem to imagine that Unitarians are still threshing over the old straw with Arius and Socinus.

The Unitarianism of to-day must be judged by its living representatives. It does not represent merely the negation of Trinitarianism, any more than Protestantism represents to-day merely the revolt from the papal supremacy. It has become a positive and constructive faith, and as such it must be judged.

The first thing that needs to be said is that *Unitarianism is a protest against the prevailing indifference to theology.* Liberalism within the great orthodox churches is apt to manifest itself in the form of latitudinarianism. A creed is looked upon as "a thing to retain and say nothing about." There is a growing aversion to what is called "doctrinal preaching." It is assumed that the age of theology, like the age of miracles, has passed. One doctrinal statement is as good as another, so long as it is not taken too seriously, but is used only as a vague symbol. It is assumed that it is possible for the Church to retain its hold upon the people,

while it ignores intellectual difficulties, so long as it turns earnestly to all sorts of good work.

Wherever this attitude prevails there is little encouragement for a Unitarian church; for it appeals only to those to whom theology, in its broadest sense, is still a vital interest. The Unitarian declares that it does matter what a person believes, and that the statement of belief should be made as unambiguous as possible. He is of the opinion that most important contributions have, in our own day, been made to theology, that is, to our thought about God and his eternal laws. He believes that a large and true theory is essential to the best practice, and he is not willing to admit that the day for doctrinal preaching has passed away. The real need is for doctrines which are in accord with all the known facts. That clear thinking is not all of religion he readily acknowledges, but that it is a very important part of it he insists. The Unitarian emphasizes intellectual sincerity, and makes it a fundamental part of his religion.

The second characteristic of the Unitarian attitude is that *it treats theology with the same seriousness and respect with which it treats any other department of human thought.* All the serious sciences are experimental in their methods, and demand free and open-eyed investigation. All the pseudo-sciences require of their votaries a blind faith as the condition of their initiation. Shall religion be studied as astronomy and chemistry are studied, or as men in the past learned the mysteries of astrology and alchemy? Shall the preacher stand on the level of the teacher in the school or university, or descend to that of an adept in an art that evades investigation?

The Unitarian insists that his religious teachers must take the higher ground. They must come up to the level of the best intelligence of our day. They must learn the methods by which truth is sifted from falsehood. In the pulpit there must be as much seriousness and patience in the effort to get at ultimate spiritual principles as the chemist exhibits in the laboratory in his qualitative analysis. This is a high standard, and I do not say that many have attained or even approached it; but nothing less than this represents the ideal of such preachers as Channing and Martineau. It is

obvious that a teacher of religion who thus conceives his function will resent any attempt to forestall his conclusions, just as a teacher in any other department resents it. He is an investigator whose chief business is to discover spiritual truth, in order that he may apply it to the development of personal righteousness. The consistent opposition of Unitarians to the imposition of any formal creed rests upon exactly the same grounds upon which a university would oppose any restriction upon freedom of inquiry.

John Milton struck the keynote of liberal religion when he wrote: "The light which we have gained was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. . . . To be still searching what we know not by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is homogeneal and proportional), this is the golden rule in theology as in arithmetic."

Another characteristic of Unitarian thought is that *it marks the meeting place of ethics and theology.* The streams of religious feeling and of ethical endeavor have historically had different sources, and have often flowed along different channels. One comes from the awe and wonder produced by the contemplation of the power or powers above humanity. The other grows out of the experiences of a man among his fellows. Primitive religions had very little connection with moral principles. Pity was something which might exist with very little honesty or kindliness. We see this in the traditions of the Hebrew patriarchs. Jacob was a man of a very inferior ethical development. He was guilty of deceit toward his father, of treachery toward his brother. He was consumed by a passion for "getting on in the world," and was unscrupulous in regard to the means used. But, according to the standards of his day, he was a religious man. He dreamed dreams wherein he saw angels of God ascending and descending, he heard heavenly voices, he was conscious of the presence of an object for worship, he built altars, he made sacrifices, he paid tithes.

Only slowly did the idea grow that true worship must correspond to right conduct, and that religion must be tested by its fruits in the character. The time came when a man who acted as Jacob is reported to have done was no longer

recognized as a truly religious man. It is because religious ideals had been slowly modified and purified by moral progress.

Now just what has been accomplished in the realm of practical religion, the Unitarian declares, must also be accomplished in theology, that is, in the theory and science of religion. Theological doctrines must be subjected to a moral test. Those which contradict the best ethical standards of our time must be rejected. It was just here that Channing took his stand. His "moral argument against Calvinism" was the protest of the outraged conscience against a tyrannous system of theology. God, he argued, cannot be less loving, less just, than the best of his creatures. That cannot be accepted as the will of God which is seen at once to be unworthy when ascribed to man. The Unitarian criticism of doctrines, like that of predestination to eternal misery, vicarious atonement, and imputed righteousness, has usually been that they are unethical. This criticism rests on the assumption that no doctrine can be theologically true and ethically unsound.

The doctrines concerning the nature of Jesus have also been affected by moral considerations. The orthodox believer has often felt that he did the highest honor to Jesus by removing him to a place apart from humanity and above it, by declaring that he is unique and inimitable. To the Unitarian this seems a distinct loss. He insists that the chief significance of the life of Jesus is that its qualities have been continually repeated in the lives of those who have loved him. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself to walk even as he walked."

Unitarianism has no new doctrine concerning God, it lays claim to no new definition; but it lays particular stress upon the moral argument. In the full and free development of that which is highest in human nature, it finds the way of approach to the divine nature. Theology is simplified by this method. An answer comes to the question, What are the things essential, and how may they be distinguished from things unessential? The Unitarian declares that only those things are essential to his theology which are essential to the development of a strong, faithful, hopeful, and helpful life. He is not troubled, then, if his thoughts do not

arrange themselves into a complete metaphysical system. He is content on many interesting points to suspend his judgment. It is sufficient for him to rest in a simple faith in eternal goodness, which may strengthen and sustain him in his own best endeavors. The only faith he greatly values is "a faith that works by love."

So far from being "coldly intellectual," as has been so often asserted, Unitarian theology, on its constructive side, is allied not so much to intellectual as to distinctively spiritual movements. Channing belonged not to the order of logicians, like Aquinas and Calvin, but to the same order of religious teachers as Thomas à Kempis, Tauler, and Fénelon. The kind of theology which interested him was not "systematic theology" in the scholastic sense, but the simple "discourse concerning God" from men to whom God was a reality. It was theology in the sense in which the German mystic of the fourteenth century understood the word when he published his book of devotional thought under the title "Eine Deutsche Theologie." It is noticeable that Unitarian ministers are more apt to quote from the poets who have "listened to the inner flow of things" than from the metaphysicians. They agree with Milton when he said, "Our sage and serious poet Spenser, I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas."

It has not been my purpose to speak of the contents of Unitarian theology. Any one who will take the trouble to read the ample literature that is easily accessible will be convinced that the movement which began with so much spiritual promise has not lost itself in barren speculations nor in dreary negations. At no period of its history has there been more unity of faith in God and righteousness than now. My aim has been to indicate the starting-point and not the goal, the way of approach to the problems of theology.

The Unitarian Church requires of those who would enter its fellowship no assent to any form of doctrinal statement. It does expect of them a certain intellectual and spiritual attitude. It is the attitude of a serious student at the beginning of the study of a great subject which must task all his powers, the attitude of a faithful workman preparing himself for strenuous but inspiring labor. Above all, it is the attitude of a child in his father's house for whom all mysteries, however dark, are interpreted by love.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of..... ...dollars.

[No. 75]

THE

GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY

FROM

THE MUSTARD SEED.

BY

REV. THOMAS G. MILSTED.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity: and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY FROM THE MUSTARD-SEED.

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the Kingdom of God, or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds that be in the earth; but when it is sown it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. — MARK iv. 30–32.

WHEN we plant a tree or a vine it is interesting to watch its growth. Even though we know that it is duly cared for, we like to see it put forth the slender branch, and note its development till it grows into the spreading tree or the climbing ivy. Growth everywhere is likewise interesting. The knowledge men once possessed was as the smallest seed of the earth; but it has grown from more to more till it embraces the heavens and the earth, nature and life. Jesus tells us that the Kingdom of God is to come in the same way; from a grain of mustard-seed it will grow till it becomes greater than all herbs, giving shelter to many living creatures.

When we look upon the Christian System filling so much of life with its churches, its doctrines, its forms, services and ceremonies, we are apt to think that it has always been thus; but that would be a great mistake. Christianity as it now is did not spring full-fledged into being, as Minerva is fabled to have sprung from the brain

of Jove. Its growth was slow, and can be readily traced from its small beginning down through the Christian centuries.

What then was the starting-point, the first statement of doctrinal Christianity? Simply this, *that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ.* When John the Baptist was in prison he sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Art thou he that cometh, or do we look for another?" — that is, another Messiah. (Matt. xi. 3.) Jesus asked the Apostles, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" Some had said he was John the Baptist; some, Elijah; others, Jeremiah. But Peter said, "Thou art *the Christ*, the Son of the living God."[1] And Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." (Matt. xvi. 13–17.) The high priest besought Jesus to tell whether he was *the Christ.* (Matt. xxvi. 63). "When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word testifying to the Jews that Jesus was *the Christ.*" (Acts xviii. 5). "For he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was *the Christ.*" (Acts xviii. 28). We see from these passages that the whole question centred around the Messiahship of Jesus.

The simplicity of Apostolic doctrine is further seen in the account of Philip and the eunuch, contained in the eighth chapter of Acts (Revised Version). The eunuch was on his way to his native land, and sitting in his chariot was reading the Scriptures. What were the Scriptures? The Old Testament. The Gospels were not yet written; the story of Jesus lived only in the hearts and memories of the Apostles. Paul was, as yet, an unconverted Pharisee, and had not penned his immortal Epistles. Those first preachers of the Word had not

[1] *Christ* is the translation into Greek of the Hebrew word *Messiah*, that is, *Anointed.*

the New Testament, as we have, from which to read; so Philip began at that same Scripture and "preached unto him Jesus." They came to a certain water: the eunuch said, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" They stopped the chariot, and went down into the water; the eunuch was baptized into the new faith, and went on his way rejoicing.

The Apostles asked no questions about original sin, endless punishment, or verbal inspiration; but simply, "Do you believe that Jesus was the Messiah?" The Jews said, "No! he was not; the Messiah is yet to come." The Apostles said, "The Messiah is already come; look no more with longing eyes to the land of David for his appearing; watch no more the clouds of heaven for his coming; he has already come; Jesus was he." About this one point raged the first controversy of our faith; and the convert had only to say he believed Jesus was the Messiah or Christ and be baptized.

Thus far Christianity was still within the pale of Judaism. The Apostles were still Jews, and had no thought of neglecting the Law or of setting up anything in opposition to it. But soon gentile converts began to embrace Christianity, and the question arose, Must they also embrace the Law? Must they become Jews before they could become Christians? All the Apostles but Paul said "Yes." He, having in the mean time been converted, said, "No. The Law is now done away, superseded by the Gospel." Paul's view finally prevailed. Christianity was then separated from Judaism, and started on its own course of development and growth.

The early Christians believed the world was coming to an end in their day with the second appearing of Christ. This belief completely absorbed their attention and interest, so that they gave little thought to other things. But when they found that the second coming of Christ was not to be in their day, they began to spec-

ulate on the various things connected with their faith; and, as we would naturally suppose, their thought and inquiry first centred around the central figure of that faith, — Christ. Was he God, or man, or neither, or both? He was at first regarded as the Master and Teacher, and perfected type of our humanity. But speculation did not allow him to rest here. He was soon identified with the WORD, the Wisdom, the Thought of God, the *Logos* of the philosophers; and the first step was thus taken towards the doctrine of the Trinity. The divinity of the Word was set forth by Justin and others in the latter half of the second century after Christ.

The word *Trinity* does not occur in the New Testament, nor anywhere in the Bible, nor in any Christian writing for nearly two centuries. Tertullian, at the end of the second century, was the first to use the word in such a way as to bring it into the vocabulary of the Church; and he thus plunged the Church into a controversy which has not yet ceased. Even when this great father of the Church used the word, it was with a meaning with which we would all agree. He said that when we see sunlight on the floor of a room we say it is the sun shining there; but if we wish to distinguish between the light in the room and the far-away orb of day from which it comes, we must call the former sun*beam*, and only the latter the *sun*. Likewise, argued Tertullian, we may call the spirit in Christ divine, but must distinguish between it and the Lord of all, whence it came; for as no room can contain all the light of day, neither can any soul compass all the spirit of God. This is exactly the liberal Christian view, — that there was in Christ as much of the spirit of God as can be compassed by a living soul, as much of the eternal as can be contained in the temporal, as much of the immortal as can be joined to the mortal, as much of the heavenly as can be brought to our earthly abode, as much of the Divine

spirit as can dwell within the limits of flesh and blood; while over and above this is the immeasurable fulness of the Most High, who inhabiteth eternity, and who "weaveth the ages as a garment upon a loom."

For more than a hundred years the nature of Christ and his relation to the Father were discussed and debated, he being exalted more and more with the passing years, until the Council of Nicæa, in the year 325 A. D., declared in the Nicene Creed that Christ was "of the same substance" with the Father. The two names most prominent in the proceedings of this Council are those of Athanasius, a celebrated Greek father of the Church, and Arius. The former held the belief which the Council adopted; the latter taught that Christ was a created being midway between God and man. For half a century after this decision raged the violent "Arian Controversy." And by this time the deification of Jesus had been carried so far, that Apollinaris denied that there was a human soul in Christ. This teaching was deemed a heresy, to decide upon which another Council must be called. Again, the first council, after stating what was believed concerning Christ, had added, "And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost." Here was another subject for discussion, and an occasion for new heresies; so in the year 381 A. D. a council was called at Constantinople, which settled the Apollinarian heresy, and added to the Creed a declaration that the Spirit is also a Divine Person, to be "worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son." Thus, a little before the end of the fourth century, the Trinity was fully established as the doctrine of the Church. But it was not till the year 451 A. D. that this doctrine received its final authoritative form, at the fourth Œcumenical Council of Chalcedon.

We notice that Constantine the Great, who called together the first Council at Nicæa, was also instrumental in establishing Sunday as the Christian day of rest and

worship. We read in the New Testament that "when the first day of the week was come," the Apostles met together. But the Jewish day began at sunset; and scholars are now agreed that those first-day meetings were at the time corresponding to our Saturday evening, after the services of the Jewish Sabbath were over. Down to the time of Constantine there were four ways among Christians of keeping the Sabbath: some kept Saturday, some, Sunday; others, in order to be sure, kept both; others, again, trying to follow Paul's command to make every day the same, kept neither. Constantine, in order to have uniformity of worship, and to unite his subjects as closely as possible, issued the following edict in the year 321 A. D.: "Let all judges and inhabitants of cities, and all craftsmen, rest on the venerable day of the Sun. But countrymen may lawfully and freely attend to the cultivation of the fields, lest by delay the opportunity granted by the favor of heaven should be lost; seeing that it so frequently happens that the grain and the vine cannot be so fitly planted on any other day." This was the first enactment or command, whether civil or religious, to keep the first day of the week instead of the seventh. Some think that a civil edict was not of sufficient authority to warrant the change. But it was a necessity of history; and the way of history is the way of God. It was God working through the man Moses who established the seventh day as the day of worship, and it was God working through the man Constantine who afterwards established the first day instead.

The next great leader in the development of doctrine was Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. He was born in North Africa in the year 353 and died in the year 430, while the Vandals were besieging the city of Hippo, his home. Augustine was born of a Pagan father and a Christian mother, and followed the faith of his father. All the efforts of his mother for his conversion to Christianity

were long of no avail. He had the best education that the times afforded, and became a teacher of rhetoric and philosophy. According to his "Confessions," he deviated widely from the path of rectitude; until at the age of thirty-one he was converted by Ambrose, of Milan, and, after his baptism two years later, became a teacher and preacher of his newly embraced faith.

In judging his past life and the corrupt Roman world from the Christian standpoint, a thing which most impressed itself deeply upon Augustine's attention was sin. Whence came this sin, and what was its nature? The Jews before the time of Christ, and the Apostle Paul following this view, held the belief that in Adam all humanity fell; that all are born in *Original Sin;* we are not born in the image of God, but come into the world bearing the great burden of *Native Depravity.* This doctrine, as so large a part of Christendom now holds it, was first elaborated and taught by Augustine. But he did not stop here. If men persist in sin they will suffer *Everlasting Punishment.* Though several others had accepted and urged this doctrine, interpreting literally the language of the Testament, which we regard as symbolical, Augustine is the first writer to undertake a long and elaborate defence of the doctrine of endless punishment. Not yet content, he pushes on to the doctrines of *Predestination* and *Election,* supposing himself here to be teaching the doctrine of Paul, which we interpret in quite another sense: the human will is so enfeebled and broken and corrupt through Adam, that it is utterly powerless; it can do nothing of itself, and men will go into everlasting weal or woe according to the arbitrary decree of the Creator.

"Hence, for heathens and for unbaptized children, there is no hope in the world to come of ever seeing God. The result of this belief was to make general the practice of infant baptism, which was not before Augus-

tine's time the universal custom." So interested is he in throwing the terrible chain of his logic around humanity, and in showing the condemnation and the doom of the race, "that the redemption of the world by Christ inevitably assumes a subordinate place, and is practically denied. Adam, and not Christ, becomes the normal man, the representative and federal head of the race."[1] The most loving souls in the church resisted such views with all their power; but the views of Augustine finally prevailed, and Original Sin, Total Depravity, Predestination and Election, Infant Damnation and Endless Punishment at length became doctrines of a large portion of the Christian Church.

It was not till the time we have just considered that the canon of the New Testament was settled. Until the middle of the second century the Christians used the Old Testament in their polemics and apologetics. Not till the beginning of the third century do we find references to the New Testament writings as authoritative. They were not thought to be inspired as were the Old Testament Scriptures. But gradually the interest of the church centred upon the New Testament books. There existed a number of gospels and epistles. They were collected, studied, compared, and some rejected as uncanonical. Several synods in the fourth century, the latest at Carthage in 397, had made official lists of the canonical books; and in 405 Pope Innocent I. fixed by decree the New Testament Canon as it now stands.

The next doctrinal controversy of interest to us was that on the Real Presence. Radbertus, a monk of the ninth century, taking literally the words, "this is my body," and "this is my blood," held that a miraculous change takes place in the elements of the Eucharist in the act of consecration. This was in the year 831; and

[1] A. V. G. Allen, "Continuity of Christian Thought," 157, 160.

though the most intelligent men of the age made a vigorous protest, the doctrine of Transubstantiation, as was understood, at length gained the day, and became the central idea of the Mass of the Catholic Church, though it was not formally established until 1215 A. D.

The central doctrine of modern Orthodoxy is the Atonement. Many of the fathers of the Church taught that in the death of Christ a ransom was paid to Satan, who had acquired rights over humanity. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the beginning of the twelfth century modified this doctrine, by teaching that Christ, becoming man, fulfilled in himself the perfect virtue which man is naturally unable to obtain, and by the "imputation" of that virtue makes man's salvation possible.

He thus laid a foundation, in what is called the "governmental" theory, for the modern doctrine of a strictly "vicarious" atonement.[1]

The power of the papacy had been raised to a great height by such able popes as Gregory VII. (1073–1085) and Innocent III. (1198–1216). The keys had been given to Peter, with the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. One result of this was the *Confessional.* Auricular confession had become an established custom as early as the fifth century; but it was enjoined, under penalties, by a council held in Rome in the year 1215.

One of the great lights of the Church of the Middle Age was Thomas Aquinas (1227–1274). One of the subjects to which he gave his attention was the connection between reason and faith. He found that reason was of no avail where the mysteries of faith were concerned, so

[1] The word "atonement" does not occur in the New Testament. In the King James Version a word in Rom. v. 11 was translated "atonement," but in the Revised Version it is changed to "*reconciliation,*" which is indeed the central principle of our faith, — the reconciliation of man to God.

that we must take whatever the Church teaches on faith; all revelation is committed to it; and he re-enforced what had been declared ever since the time of Tertullian, — that though what the Church teaches stultifies the reason, we must nevertheless accept it. This degradation of the reason has become a tenet of Evangelical Protestantism as well. The supporter of any illogical position takes refuge, when hard pushed, in the thought that what he upholds is a mystery and must be held in blind faith. That is why there are so many absurd and unreasonable things in the narrower phases of religion; thought and reason are barred out, as out of place amid sacred things. Saint Thomas Aquinas fortified the Church with a system of theology, in which all things of heaven and earth are supposed to be forever fixed and settled; there is to be no more inquiry on the part of men; the book of Revelation and the interpretation of it is forever closed and committed to the Church. This is the attitude of the greater part of the Christian Church to-day. It is an inheritance not of Christ or Paul, but of Thomas Aquinas. The present Pope of Rome, Leo XIII., wishes to take the world back to the theology of Saint Thomas, thinking that in it is the solace of all ecclesiastical woes, and the solution of all church difficulties.

We come now to the age of the Reformation. The Reformation had its beginning not in a doctrinal but in a moral impulse. If the Catholic Church had been as pure in Luther's time as it is to-day, there would have been no Reformation. Luther differed from the Catholic Church on only a few doctrinal points, and took most of the Catholic theology undiminished and unchanged. In 1530 was adopted the Augsburg Confession, consisting of fifteen articles, which stated the main points of Luther's theology, and which is to-day the foundation of the Lutheran Church of Europe and America. In his contest with the Catholics Luther was continually met with the

statement that they were right because they were acting on the authority of the *infallible church*, while he had no authority for his position. He then made the counter claim that his authority was the *infallible Bible*. The Catholics said it required an infallible interpreter; and then, for the first time in the Christian Church, the plenary verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, with the right of private interpretation, were taught by the Protestant reformers as doctrines of Christianity, and were received by their followers as such. Luther was driven to this position by his sore need of an authority on which to stand. But he was very inconsistent in explaining and applying his view, especially where there was such a plain difference as that between the writings of Paul and James; and he injured the cause of religion in later and more critical times by confusing the ideas of inspiration and infallibility. We all gladly admit, yes, claim, that the truth of the Bible, where it appeals directly to the conscience and heart, is inspired; that is, it is the power of the Divine Spirit working on the souls of men. But inasmuch as the writers of the Bible were men, with their share of the errors, weaknesses, and ignorance that are the portion of every human being, some of their imperfections would inevitably creep into the sacred Book, and though inspired, it would not be infallible.

After Luther came Calvin (1509–1564), who at the early age of twenty-six brought forth his *Institutes*. He simply went back to Augustine, reasserting in a more logical and terrible form, if possible, the doctrines which (we have seen) were taught by the African Bishop, — of total depravity, predestination, endless punishment, and others. We can see how little Calvin originated, from the fact that professors in Calvinistic theological schools speak of Calvinism and Augustinianism as synonymous terms.

In the year 1552 Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, conceived the idea of framing a statement of belief with

which to combat the work of the Catholic Council of Trent, then in session; and he invited Calvin, Melanchthon, and other reformers to London for that purpose. They did not come; but Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, with the aid of other divines, drew up forty-two "Articles of Religion" for the English Church. Soon after this Mary came to the English throne, and those chiefly instrumental in drawing up the forty-two articles lost their lives. Under Elizabeth the articles were restored, and in 1563 were reduced to thirty-nine; and in these we have the doctrinal foundation of the Church of England and of the Episcopal Church of America to this day. The framers of the Thirty-nine Articles drew largely upon the *Institutes* of Calvin for their theology; and that is why these articles are so strongly Calvinistic, affirming total depravity, election, and predestination.

In the year 1642, when the Puritan element was in the ascendency in England, was called the famous Westminster Assembly, which continued to hold sessions for five years (1643–1648). It produced two catechisms, the Larger and the Smaller, covering all questions of belief, church organization, and worship. These catechisms were approved by the Parliaments of England and Scotland, and are the foundation of the Presbyterianism of the world. The Westminster Assembly took its theology almost bodily from the *Institutes* of Calvin; and that is why the Presbyterian Church is so intensely Calvinistic.

After the accession of James the First, in 1603, the Puritans were so oppressed that many of them came to this country, bringing their Calvinistic theology, but choosing for themselves the Congregational form of church government. It was in the bosom of these Congregational Churches that Unitarianism, as we in America have received it, came to exist, simply by dropping the Calvinistic theology, — going back of Calvin, and back of his teacher, Augustine, to the Scriptures them-

selves and to our faith as it was held, we think, in the Christian Church of the Apostles.

Here, then, we have seen the growth of doctrinal Christianity from its first small beginning, — the statement that Jesus was the Messiah. To sum up the whole subject, and at the same time to show that the position taken is the true one, I shall quote the words of an eminent orthodox scholar, who teaches that of all the doctrines which now make up the theology of the Church, only one — the doctrine of the *Incarnation* or *God in man* — was believed and taught by the Greek Church, that is, the Church of the first three centuries; and that the doctrines whose origin we have traced are a growth of the Latin Church, are of a later age, and are irreconcilable with the spirit of the Early Christian Church. He says: "None of the individual doctrines or tenets, which have so long been the objects of dislike and animadversion to the modern theological mind, formed any constituent part of the Greek theology. The tenets of original sin and total depravity, as expounded by Augustine and received by the Protestant churches from the Latin Church, the guilt of infants, the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation, the denial of the freedom of the will, the doctrine of election, the idea of schism in the Divine nature which required a satisfaction to retributive justice before love could grant forgiveness, the atonement as a principle of equivalence by which the sufferings of Christ were weighed in a balance against the endless sufferings of the race, the notion that revelation is confined within the Book, guaranteed by the inspiration of the letter or by a line of priestly curators in apostolic descent, the necessity of miracles as the strongest evidences of the truth of a revealed religion, the doctrine of sacramental grace and priestly mediation, the idea of the Church as identical with some particular form of ecclesiastical organization, — these and

other tenets which have formed the gist of modern religious controversy find no place in the Greek theology and are irreconcilable with its spirit." [1] This surprising and sweeping statement is the verdict of the scholarship of Christendom.

And now in closing I should like to call the attention of the reader to several points. Notice that after the first three centuries the central truths of our faith are not so prominent as the questions over which theologians disputed. Notice that down through the debates of Nicæa, down through the doctrinal discussions of Augustine, down through the disputes of the Middle Age, down through the time of Calvin, of the Thirty-nine Articles, and of the Westminster Assembly, and through all the endless controversies of the Christian centuries, — notice that through all this we hear very little of the gospel of love, very little of the Fatherhood of God, very little of the Brotherhood of Man, very little of the glad tidings which Jesus came to proclaim to the world. All this, the heart of our faith, is subordinated to scholastic questions, is lost to view in the dust and noise of theologic dispute; and the great growth we have witnessed is foreign to its nature.

Notice, too, that the preachers of orthodoxy, in upholding their position, do not go back to the fountain-head of Christianity, but to some one or something later, — to the Westminster Catechisms, or to the Thirty-nine Articles, or to the Augsburg Confession; and these again go back to Calvin or some other similar authority, and he to Augustine, who in turn went to the world of sin around him, and the sin which had been in his own heart before he became a Christian; all going back to some man, or council, or condition of things, instead of to the gospel of love and the glad tidings as it was in Jesus.

[1] A. V. G. Allen, "Continuity of Christian Thought," 19, 20.

Verily, it is plain, that this great growth of the Christian Church sadly needs pruning, that its rich life may not be exhausted in all these ways which are not native to it, but which are a foreign growth and an ecclesiastical burden.

At the same time, the Church has put forth many fair branches that have borne a heavenly fruitage: the beautiful hymns that each age delights to sing, which always find hearts in which to nestle and tongues that love to give them voice; the uplifting prayers that have sprung from noble souls, and so well express the needs and aspirations of countless other souls; the religious books that are the comfort and solace of many a lonely hour; the noble temples that adorn the earth; the exalted lives which found their strength in the gospel; the Christian characters, the saintly records, inspired by the life of Christ; the charities, the philanthropies, the reforms, the high endeavors for humanity, which are the direct results of his teachings and spirit. All these are realizations of the truth of the gospel, and are born of the very life-blood of the New Testament. These are the flower and the fruitage of our faith; and there is so much that is beautiful and holy in the Christian Church, because there have been so many souls that rose above the level of the doctors of the Church into that diviner realm into which our faith was meant to lift all mankind. These are the ways in which the glad tidings of Christ should grow, till nothing but the branches of faith, hope, love, and the blessings they will bring, spring from that gospel divine. Then it will indeed grow till it fills the heavens and the earth; it will bring peace on earth, goodwill to men; it will fill all with the life that has been the glory of the great souls of the Christian ages; and at last all nations will rest in the shadow of it, and be filled with the blessedness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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THE

JUDGMENT-DAY OF THE CHURCH.

BY

CHARLES G. AMES, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES, BOSTON.

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THE JUDGMENT-DAY OF THE CHURCH.

CAN we at all comprehend the time in which we are living? To me, the modern situation seems like a solemn judicial proceeding, — a day of judgment, when all human affairs, and we with the rest, are being put on trial, and are undergoing a searching inquiry. The Judge of mankind does not array himself in robe and wig and ascend a bench; he is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; "all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." But the proceeding is not less solemn, searching, and decisive because carried on informally; carried on privately, in the court of individual reason and conscience; and publicly, in the collective mental activity of our time, in the visible conflicts of principle and in the outworking of social results. For who does not see that what we call civilization is being put to proof, — that all established institutions and time-honored standards are under challenge? Nor is the tribunal less divine because it is set up in the human mind, and conducted by human faculties. "It is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes."

The test of an iron girder or a stick of timber is, how much weight will it carry; how much strain will it stand? The test of a factory is, what quality and quantity of products does it turn out? The test of an athlete may be, how much can he lift, or how far and fast can

he run? Heart, brain, lungs, every organ and fibre, are tested by the daily demand for endurance and performance. So are principles and institutions tried by experience and by their fitness to human nature and need. Our educational systems and methods must submit to be tested by the kind of men and women they produce; our political institutions by the amount and kind of liberty and benefit they procure for the people. The people themselves must answer for the wisdom and justice of their laws, and their loyalty to those laws; they must prove their capacity for self-government and for intelligent co-operation in promoting the common welfare. And the stuff of every man's and woman's character is continually tested by the life-trial, as gold is tried by the fire. Always we are before the all-viewing judgment-seat; always the books are open; always, whether they know it or not, the living are judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works.

But the standard of moral judgment is adjustable to changing conditions. With every increase of intelligence and ability comes increase of responsibility. In this wide process of human evolution, we are carried up to new planes of possibility, and therefore of duty; for where much is given, there will much be required. Thus come critical periods in history, — awful days of reckoning, — when thought, feeling, and conduct, and their organic expression, must be adjusted to higher standards as the only escape from degeneracy and decay, or from personal and social damnation. Then, whether we will or not, we are all summoned before that judgment-seat of Truth, which is the bar of God. Then, on the dome of the sky, as on a mighty bell, a new hour strikes for the world.

I must speak of *the present religious situation* as one of high and pressing judicial inquiry. Our sacred institutions, authorities, beliefs, and methods, are being

brought to trial, — brought to trial both in the private mind and before all Israel and the sun. "The time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God."

The sacred books, the doctrines, the church, the ministry, the religious ideals, standards, and customs, must all undergo impartial, passionless, thorough scrutiny. On the threshing-floor of the world, through the so-called Christian ages, have accumulated vast heaps of wheat and chaff; and lo! there comes a Mighty One, a majestic Spirit of Truth, whose winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his floor; his wheat he will gather into his garner, the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

This discriminating or judging process goes everywhere and reaches all human concerns. "God will search Jerusalem with a lighted candle," said a Hebrew prophet; meaning that the All-Seeing would look into every corner. To deal with the spiritual condition of a people is to deal with their entire life, — ecclesiastical, civil, social, literary, educational, industrial, domestic, personal; nothing escapes; for to touch the heart is to touch every organ and tissue.

Such a judgment-day comes with every increase of light. For the light makes manifest our imperfections, and compels us to condemn them, or to do worse and become worse. "For judgment I am come into the world," said Jesus. The light which came with him revealed the incompleteness of the old order and the possibility of a better one. It compelled men to choose whether they would remain in the bondage of the form and the letter, or rise into the light and liberty of the spirit. It compelled a new valuation of all things; things long held as precious were shown to be inferior or worthless, while things long despised were seen to be precious in the sight of God.

Away went temple and priest; the gods of Olympus

scampered off to oblivion; the idols were sent to the curiosity-shop; the gorgeous old worships with their oracles and litanies, their pomps and processions, their painted scenes and stage properties, were swept into the rubbish-heap. Was it so sad that the fires went out on ten thousand altars? No, the sky was left clear of their blinding smoke, and men of humble heart looked up and saw the face of the Father. "The fair humanities of old religion" gave place to a broader brotherhood; the profitable and oppressive monopoly of spiritual functions and the trade in sacrifices vanished before a faith which made every man a priest of the Most High; and as the old Jerusalem perished, there were visions of a new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven.

Eighteen centuries ago great judgments and transformations were accomplished through divinely human agencies and through an increase of spiritual light: what may we look for to-day? Has there not once more been a great increase of light? "*Whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*" The proof of increasing light is increasing clearness of vision; and certainly nothing looks to us as it did to a former generation. *Imperfection* has become manifest and glaring, — imperfection in our traditional faith and practice, and in the evidence on which that faith has rested. The light has made plain to many eyes the incompleteness of Protestantism as well as of Romanism; of Unitarianism as well as of Orthodoxy; it has made it impossible for multitudes to retain their reason or their honesty, and still to think and feel, or profess and act, as their fathers did.

"God is light," said a Christian apostle. "God is a sun," sang a Hebrew poet. "Walk in the light, and ye shall not stumble," said Jesus. No matter how or whence light comes, it is God's revelation; it is commanding; it brings every work to judgment.

This modern light, which shines in our minds and illu-

minates the whole field of religious thought; this increase of rationality, which is like more abundant life; this wider and exacter knowledge of human history and of natural law, — shall we call it a flash from the pit, or shall we devoutly recognize it as our heaven-sent guide? And if that light shines in our own minds and enables us to *judge* more wisely, and thus to correct and amend our ways, must we not take heed lest the light within us become darkness? By that light we must approve or condemn all that we have called sacred, as well as all that we have called secular.

What if geology shows us that the world is older than the Hebrews thought? What if astronomy shows us that the ancient conception of the universe, with this little earth for its centre, was a natural but childish mistake? What if the old arguments for miracle and the whole theory of supernaturalism should break down under honest scrutiny of the evidence? What if better acquaintance with history lets us see the growth of Jewish and Christian myths as plainly as we can trace those of Greek and Roman? What if this sublime and unequalled collection of ancient writings is found, on closer scrutiny, to reflect the errors as well as the wisdom and inspiration of its authors? What if the appeal to the authority of an infallible book, or of an infallible church, is met by reasonable proofs that no such infallibility exists? — Must we close our eyes to the increasing light, for fear of offending the Father of lights?

"This is not an enlightened age," said Lessing; "but an age *becoming* enlightened." After long, dark days and nights of rain, when the wind veers northward, and rends the storm-cloud without clearing the sky, men look up and see the blue through the rifts; but they see also the broken, drifting masses of gray, edged with silver and gold, yet neither gray nor blue holding any fixed place or shape. They say, "It is not clear, but it will

be." Thus, throughout Christendom, is the modern mind passing through a period of uncertainty and suspense, — a period of conflict between its own broken, shifting traditions and its interrupted glimpses of some vaster background of truth and world-reality. When a morning wind of free inquiry arose, the clouds of doctrine, which had long obscured our spiritual skies, began to break and scatter; and though nothing is yet clear or settled, many watchers have caught hints of an infinite realm of light and cosmic order, stretching in calm serenity above and beyond the low-down, shut-in, and wavering firmament of theology. Amid the confusion, some cry in alarm, "What will be left, if we lose our blessed clouds!" while others answer, "The things that cannot be shaken will remain!"

How like a blazing day of judgment the light of truth is exposing the elements of unreality and misconception in our religious thought and belief! Fiction and delusion have been clothed with beautiful forms and set to music. Words and phrases of sweet and solemn sound have played tricks with our imagination; and base metal has passed for coin current, because stamped with some *fac simile* of the royal image and superscription. Under all manner of sacred disguises, human errors and follies have been accepted as divine gifts and requirements. Become religious, and you are in the ark of safety. Range yourself under any banner that bears the sign of the cross, and you pass for a disciple of Christ. Call him "Lord! Lord!" and it shall be counted for righteousness. Enroll your name among professors, and it will be found at last in the book of life. Yet the sharp-eyed men of the world know well enough that —

> "A man may cry 'Church! Church!' at every word,
> And have no more grace than other people;
> The daw 's not reckoned a religious bird
> Because he keeps a-cawing in the steeple."

It is becoming plain that religions are of all grades, — good, bad, and indifferent. There is a religion which spoils a man for all good uses in this world in pretending to fit him for another. There is a religion which turns one's eyes toward the sky so that he does not mind where he is stepping, nor have quite wit enough to understand another man's rights. There is a religion which is all profession and no practice, or all doctrine and no duty. There is a religion which is like spiritual fever and chills: it merely raises the temperature of a man's emotions, and then leaves him to cool off, — a little worse for every fit. There is a religion which is like nightmare, filling the mind with phantoms, working confusion of thought and paralysis of all natural faculties and feelings. And there is a religion — oh, how much of it! — which is merely play-acting and make-believe, a pretty drama of music and prayers, a merry-go-round, or a solemn-go-round, in an easy groove of outward observances which bring us to the same place, — a buzz of ceremony forgotten at the church door, and which might be as harmless as other parlor theatricals, if it did not cheat us into the idea that we were doing something to please God and save our souls.

When all this religiosity comes to the light of judgment, or to the inspection of an enlightened judgment, we are compelled to ask, What is it worth? What can it do for us? Can God or man accept it as a substitute for spiritual worship, for reasonable thinking, or for faithful living?

This day of judgment is also compelling us to scrutinize whatever may hide itself under the word "Christian" — a word which has long been the convenient and respectable label for a thousand forms of error and evil. If any plausible absurdity could get itself accepted as "a mystery of faith;" if any piece of bigotry or despotic usurpation could screen itself behind a text; if any pious

pretence or smoothfaced hypocrisy could produce a certificate of baptism, — a large part of the Christian world seems to have resented any attempt to expel or expose the offender, as an impious attack upon the sanctuary. Think what tyrannies and terrors, what heathenisms and fanaticisms, have found and still find shelter under the Christian name! It is this profanation of holy things, this desecration of the human soul, this atheistic disparagement of nature and reason, this adulterous mixture of sanctities and frivolities, this intrusion of worldliness into the holy of holies, this compounding of the bread of life with ecclesiastical sawdust, — it is this which has produced the modern religious crisis and made it necessary that judgment should begin at the house of God.

What if most of what we call our faith and worship — Catholic or Protestant, Orthodox or Liberal — be diluted with some measure of these wide-spread insanities and imbecilities, all alike covered and consecrated by sacred names? Is it not a merciful judgment which compels us to face the situation, so that religion itself may be purified, and the mind of man emancipated from its time-hallowed follies?

The church is thus summoned to the confessional and to the inquest of truth. What has it to offer to the demands of human intelligence, and to the hunger of mankind for reality, beauty, goodness? What power has it to enlighten and inspire, to win and lead the awakened and uneasy multitudes, or to arouse and direct the unawakened? What power to restrain the debased and violent, to heal the hurts of society, to shame the selfishness and hush the strifes of classes, to rebuke unbrotherly greed and to clear the obstructed ways of welfare for the masses? These are sober, earnest questions; they must be answered. The day of the Lord shall be heavy upon all that is spurious and irrational, upon all

the proud and haughty, upon all cowards and pretenders and liars, upon all men and measures that cannot bear the light.

Yet is this day of judgment not merely a day of doom; it is a day of new opportunity and of glorious hope. Every critical period is a call of progress — an hour of new departures. For the increasing light, which exposes our imperfections and mistakes, shows also the higher ideal and the upward path. The New challenges the Old because the time is ripe for change. As Emerson teaches, "The existing order has a right to be until we can develop moral force enough to put something better in its place." Mere criticism, however necessary, is the smallest part of a true reform. Moral progress is an up-hill business. If there is a true conservatism which blocks the wheels behind to save us from going backward, there is a false conservatism which blocks them in front to hinder advance. So if there is a true radicalism which would root out whatever is wrong and hurtful, there is also a false radicalism which like a swine makes havoc of the fairest plants in the garden of humanity. If Zion is to be "redeemed with judgment," we must distinguish between the spirit which loves to destroy and the spirit which destroys only to make room for better construction.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The modern test of our religious work must be found in its fitness to modern needs. Does it mean life? Does it represent *movement?* Does it permit and promote human completeness? Does it make for progress along all the lines of development, and so harmonize all elements and interests by keeping them abreast of each other? Does it take the command, and give upward direction to the whole of life, and thus make itself identical with God in nature and God in humanity, as the force behind evolution?

Do the churches respond to this high calling? No matter how brave or patriotic the soldier, if there comes a time when he hears the order to advance, and yet stands still in his tracks, he might as well beat a retreat or desert his flag. For a church to stand still is really to go backward. To disobey orders, or to be too sleepy or too stupid to understand orders, is itself backsliding, — the beginning of apostasy. It means a check to inspiration, a chill at the heart, and weakness of the hands.

The type of piety approved in former centuries has become wellnigh impossible. It smelled of the tomb; it turned its face away from this world; it knew very little of God's work in nature, of its order and beauty; it disparaged all natural affections and sentiments and treated them with suspicion; it was blind to the perpetual revelation of God in reason, and taught man to look for the law of life outside of life itself. To that type of piety we cannot go back; let us take the divine hint and go forward to something better.

In stripping us of so much that encumbers and obscures, the righteous and merciful Judge is compelling us to see that *we have no room and no use for any religion apart from life, or completeness of being.* If a man's life is whole and full; if at any given stage he is just as complete a man as he can be, — is not the will and plan of his Creator realized?

Where is a man to keep his religion? Ask as well where he keeps his bodily health. In the medical books, in the doctor's office, in the drug-store, in the gymnasium? Let these serve as they may, his health must be in his own frame, — its fountain in his own heart, its play along his own nerves.

No more can a man keep his religion in a church, in a doctrinal statement, a profession, a Sunday, or a sacrament. His religion is the health of his being. To be real and vital it must be in himself; it must be the spirit

or principle which inspires and orders his life; else he has no religion. Look not here, nor there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you; and within you is the King and the law. Sharper than a two-edged sword is that judgment of truth which divides religion from all external or internal substitutes for it; solemn as a voice from the Throne is the sentence that condemns all the usurping authorities of church or book, of creed or ritual, when these are set above the law written in the heart of man.

But the same judgment gives sentence against *the shallow and shortsighted folly which supposes that spiritual life, health, and growth can be maintained without the use of rational means.* The soul, like the body, finds its completeness only when its *relations* are complete; and spiritual functions, like physical ones, require sustenance from their proper supplies. Church and book, prophet and priest, doctrine and form, observances and disciplines, — all have their place in the large order, as channels of endlessly circulating benefit, if we will accept them as helps, without servility or cowardice. The moment they set themselves above criticism, they come between us and the light. We should choose between them as freely as between other divinely given products and tools, and hold them subject to improvement as we do our dietetics and cookery.

Who does not know and value the help that may come from a noble book, a wise discourse, a reasonable conversation, an illustrious life, an example of heroic virtue? Or from private exercises of mind, heart, and hand, directed toward getting and giving the fine benefits of truth, beauty and goodness? Or from stated seasons of study, reflection, self-discipline, aspiration? The aids to faith, hope, and love, are largely found outside ourselves, as our breakfasts and dinners are; and like these they must be taken in and assimilated and made our

own. The sages and seers of old times and new, having been patient pupils, have become our teachers; their words are like those of the ancient sibyls, "simple, unadorned, unperfumed, and reaching through the ages, because of God."

> "Ever their phantoms rise before us,
> Our noble brothers, but one in blood;
> By bed and table they lord it o'er us,
> With looks of beauty and words of good."

As Lowell says, "There is but one thing better than tradition: that is, the original and Eternal Life, out of which tradition arose." It is a lean and pallid liberalism which throws away the costly gains of history, and the painfully gathered wisdom of experience; which finds no use for customs and institutions that have been fashioned by the need and the suffering of ages. Evolution means continuity of growth, the shedding of the outgrown and useless, but the retention of all that is vital. "Keep what you get, and get what you can;" such is the law of progress.

To this law religion must conform, along with science, art, and social order. *We must have a religion which will encourage us to keep getting*, filling us with hope and working faith. Never was the Wise Power busier than now; never more generous and communicative. Thanksgiving and praise for the light of to-day, which not only exposes our errors and evils, but also shows new forms of truth and good, for the enrichment of all brave, docile, and obedient souls!

> "There 's new life in the seed: sow and believe!
> Clearer dew did not glisten round Adam and Eve;
> Never bluer heavens nor greener sod
> Since the round world rolled from the hand of God."

But the light of to-day impeaches a religion which has failed to charm men with a sense of their common human-

ity, — a religion which deludes them with the vain belief that they can love God without loving the neighbor. The contempt of class for class, the ugly rivalries of sects and parties, the scanty welcome given by the churches to the poor, the conflicts of capital and labor, the havoc of intemperance and sexual disorder, — how could these continue to infest and afflict society unless the curative streams of wisdom and love were choked in their channels by our want of spirituality, and by the low and poor forms in which we present the high things?

We have tried the religion which teaches that God was manifest in the flesh of one divine man; we have not found it false, but inadequate; for our poor interpretation has made hundreds of millions believe in the sonship of Jesus without catching the hint that God is equally the Father of all, and that all men are brothers. We have tried the religion which teaches us to see God in the events and records of great ages gone by; we have not found it false, but inadequate; for it has not made us aware that the place whereon we stand is holy ground, and that these also are the years of God's right hand. We have sung praises and built tombs to prophets, apostles and martyrs; we have fixed our gaze on the dead Christ hanging far back there on the Roman cross; but who has taught us to see the divine light in the faces of the men, women, and children whom we meet every day, and to find the way of life and salvation in the right use of common opportunities? We have fumbled everywhere in the past for "evidences" of God's existence, and of the divine mission of Moses and Jesus; we have ransacked history, dug open the graves of dead cities, deciphered anonymous scriptures and inscriptions, and put language and logic to the torture; we have sat lowly at the feet of sages and seers and scribes; we have peeped and pried at all possible or impossible openings into the

unseen realms which we have named heaven and hell, — and yet we go uncertain and forlorn, our questions not answered, our way not clear, our hurts not healed.

Ceasing to depend on these glorious hearsays as ends or finalities, suppose we begin where we are, and *accept life itself as its own evidence, and as the key to all else, past, present, or to come.* To find God-with-us, here and now; to see the Father revealed in his own child; to trust and use the vast resources of wisdom, and love, and power, to which we have instant and constant access, — is not this the secret and method of Jesus? Is it not the interpretation of all that is, and all that has been? To find spiritual meaning in the passing hour, and to accept our daily experience and present task as a part and sample of the order of Providence — is not this the true way of salvation? What else can rescue our life from blindness, disorder, and profanation?

Our religion must stand convicted of incompetency till it shall enthrone at the centre of our being and in society the Power which is enthroned in the universe — an inward principle of wisdom and love, at once divine and human, which shall subdue all things unto itself. Such a religion will give us a sense of sanctity, by teaching the divine origin, rational value and wise use of all our faculties, relations, and interests.

When the dealer behind the counter and the customer before the counter can read in each other's eyes something better than the coarse greed to give less or get more than a dollar's worth for a dollar, then trade will become a sacrament of fellowship. When politics shall turn to the intelligent study and practice of social justice and of the conditions of well-being for all, then will God be vitally in the constitution; then caucus and convention, legislation and administration, will be so many methods of doing his will on earth as it is done in heaven. When education shall seek the completeness and symme-

try of human faculties and their training for unselfish uses, then will every form of toil be emancipated from dishonor, and a good day's work will help like a prayer; then will society go out of this hideous business of producing paupers and criminals, lunatics and imbeciles. When our knowledge of the laws of health and material well-being shall be reverently accepted as a part of divine revelation, then will the body become a temple of the Holy Spirit, and the earth will float among the stars as a part of God's heaven. Then will the pulpit exhort us to a noble worldly-mindedness as one of the means of grace; and we shall find open door-ways to the wide spirit-realm in the right knowledge and use of the things that are seen, — not as finalities, but as divine provisions for our primary education as spirits. The religion which makes room for all forms of good will teach a man to find the path to heaven by minding his own business.

Outside of all these imperfect churches, and partly inside, there is a vast world of unspiritual men — a world lying in wickedness and groping in darkness — a world which ignores alike the divine and the higher human — a world where multitudes deny and mock and blaspheme. Let no man dream of finding in unbelief or indifference a shelter from the solemn judgment of truth and righteousness. If that judgment spares no folly or fault of those who are weakly trying to find and follow the path of life, how shall they escape who wilfully or carelessly walk the other way? In all God's universe what place or state can there be where any soul may hope to pass for other than it really is, or to win any blessing of spiritual being except through being spiritually alive? "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; or if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

There is one word for ourselves — for our household of religious Liberals. We are not in court merely as witnesses, nor as prosecuting officers, nor as idle spectators

of these high proceedings. We are present before God and our brethren, to answer for ourselves. What is our part in this mixed scene of moral order and disorder, this conflict of truth and error, of good and evil? Let us search and try our ways, and lay our hearts and our lives, as well as our churches and our pulpits, open before the tribunal. Are we offering to mankind anything better than that which we criticise in others? Are we using our great opportunity to testify with lip and life, for a religion more reverent, reasonable, practical, fraternal, and progressively pure and real? Unless we can exhibit something more positive and constructive, — something better than theory, — unless we can show truth and goodness made alive in an improved and improving type of men and women, — what do we more than others? If our standard is really higher, all the more sternly must we hold ourselves to it. Let us welcome every reproof; let us rejoice in every disclosure of our own weak points; let us accept every judgment as a mercy. Studying to broaden ethical culture into total culture, let us make our churches centres of that best life which spiritual evolution has now made possible.

And if this nobler type of religion is to be cultivated, it must be planted — first, in our own hearts and homes; next, in our communities and towns. We must plant it as truth in all the open minds we can reach; must plant it, as we plant schools, in the form of fitting institutions, that it may become a power in the land. Not in the interest of a sect, but in the interest of humanity. Having put into the great words God, Man, Religion, that deeper and richer meaning which insight and experience warrant, we must put that meaning into life, into our own life, and into the life of our people and our time. We must plant in faith and hope, as the husbandman sows his acres, trusting to the vitality with which God endows the seed.

The closing word shall be one which not only hints the sad secret of our small harvests in the past, but points the way to better results in the future, if we will have it so: "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

"Full of thought, kindly, vigorously, lucidly expressed."
"Wonderfully timely."

STEPS OF BELIEF;

OR,

Rational Christianity Maintained against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism.

By JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE,

Author of "Orthodoxy: its Truths and Errors;" "Christian Doctrine of Prayer," &c.

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The literary merits of the volume, as of Dr. Clarke's writings generally, are very great. He has the art of putting things in a way to make the truths he favors most attractive, and the errors he opposes most absurd. — *Congregationalist* (*Trinitarian*), *Boston.*

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We feel an obligation to Mr. Clarke for his work which we can but inadequately express. He has done the cause of Christian truth great service. His book must make a strong impression on every fair mind. . . . He has none of the heat of the partisan, and none of the extravagance of the sentimentalist. The reader is impressed everywhere with the strength and the breadth of the mind that claims his attention. — *Universalist, Boston.*

There are hundreds of thousands of men and women in our country who would find in this book, if it could be brought to their notice, the light and help which they need in regard to the great problems of religion. We hope it may have the widest possible circulation. — *Liberal Christian, New York.*

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

[No. 77]

"IS NOT THIS JOSEPH'S SON?"

BY

REV. THOMAS L. ELIOT, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON

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"IS NOT THIS JOSEPH'S SON?"

With the text, "They wondered at his words of grace, and said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'" I propose to consider the Unitarian's faith in Jesus, and approach in so doing a truth which is to us of sublimest meaning, yet that for allegiance to which we endure most reproach. The character of Jesus, his personality, Unitarians regard as the inestimable heritage of the world; and we think the greatest injury that comes from wrong doctrines concerning Jesus' nature, is that they impair the true image of that character. Unitarians recognize in Jesus Christ, not the second person of the Trinity, incarnate in a human soul, but the life of a perfect man in communion with God's will. Our short formula is, "Jesus by his word and life proved human nature to be divine." Jesus is that Son of the Father and brother of all mankind, who of moral right can hold the loving discipleship of the whole human race, and under whose leadership chiefly God is uplifting the entire world. The inspiration and immense impulse given to the world in the life of Jesus we believe to have been, primarily and always, the faith, the belief in his real humanity, — the faith that all he said, did, suffered, and aspired to, is a human experience, a human discovery of the riches of goodness, love, and truth in God by the channel of obedience and filial trust. And why do we emphasize this truth? Why do we resist a statement of the nature

of Jesus which separates him from essential humanity? I pass by, for the present, the evidences which are found in his own words and the express spirit of his life. There is evidence enough in plain Scripture, if we but read it without prejudice; but I now rather would seek the reasons based on the very consciousness in you and me, and the unity of the universe in which we are. Does not the unity of the universe require us to believe that all moral and spiritual growth is alike? For example, in physical things the unity of nature brings us the conviction that the law of gravitation is one, its formula and method the same in Sirius as on our earth; and the spectrum of the light of Sirius — light which takes three years to travel here — evidences the same laws of chemistry and optics which affect matter in our laboratories. Faith in the unity of law is the absolute postulate or basis of all science. Is there no such unity of law in spiritual life, in questions of identity, consciousness, merit or demerit, will and reason? Must not goodness, in order to be goodness, always have the same quality of growth, overcoming the limitations of sense, subduing temptation, asserting the will in noble choice? Now Jesus' life, in the Gospel, is a record of such a growth, choice, and victory. Does not its very ground of approval, however pre-eminent he was, consist in the fact that it was life under the same conditions, the same laws, as other human life? May we not go further, and say that the very honor of Jesus' pre-eminence is due, because his was life under the same conditions and laws as other human life? But suppose, as has been the deep error of Christian history, that we assert a different law for the life and growth of Jesus' character. Suppose that we assert that his very nature was altogether different from yours and mine. What if we claim a superinduced nature, — the Godhead indwelling,

not by a law of possibility which applies to human nature as such, but only in Jesus, constituting him infinite God and man; then what becomes of *character* in Jesus, and of his whole experience? Is it any longer really like man's, or can it throw any light on human destiny and human nature as such? By the very terms of such a definition of Jesus must not human consciousness in any man be a different thing and supply a different problem of existence to that of Jesus? When we dismiss mechanical ideas of salvation; when we believe with the Apostle, who said, "Be not deceived, he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as Christ is righteous;" when we recognize no other law of the universe for goodness than becoming good, must we not then believe Jesus' experience to be *veritably like ours*, and under the same conditions, if indeed that experience is to help us? For help us it only can through the avenues of faith and confidence, inspiring our own moral purpose, awakening aspiration prophetic to every man of the things God has prepared for those who love him. But if Jesus' essential nature was different in kind from that of those he called his brethren and whom he invited to be children of God, if while he so called on us to be like himself he knew there was a distinction as wide as the universe between his life plan and that of any other man, what a mockery his invitation becomes! *As though an eagle should invite a blind worm to fly!* Do you not perceive that in the instant in which you set up such a difference as a supposed glorification of the Christ, the real Jesus is lost, his saving example is gone?

And having lost his real example, there was left to the church a new problem, — to show how Christ shall save men; and the answer soon provided was a doctrine of substitution. Jesus as man and God, says theology, saves us by *imputing* his righteousness to us. What else was left

but that? According to the scheme, human nature was a failure; God came on earth as a man, and lived a perfect life, then somehow, in dying, agreed to impute his "God righteousness" to any one who will accept it! If you will but think seriously, righteousness and badness are things that cannot come by substitute; the consequences of good or evil may fall on others, but character, — think candidly, — how can that be "imputed;" how can one be righteous except as he has been and done *right?* See how inextricable a web of unreason the system of substitution leads to! And all to adjust us about the supposed fixed point that it is impossible for man as such, for human nature *per se*, and under the orderly grace of God, to begin the life of righteousness and grow in goodness. But what if we reverse all this, and see in *Jesus himself* the perfect human life, the proof that man can become Godlike, the realized type of humanity? What if we credit his own words when he called on his disciples to realize the same Divine Presence that he did; what if we credit him with the faith that the poorest form of sinful humanity still bears the divine image, and may arise and go to the Father! At one stroke are we not rid of the phantasm of imputed righteousness, and born into an almost incredible hope? Incredible indeed, had not Jesus believed it; incredibly incredible, had he not lived out his own faith, but as certain as the sun in heaven to him who interiorly apprehends Jesus and his gospel. He did indeed come to save mankind. He came to save us from scepticism, from unbelief in ourselves. He came to make discovery for us of the measureless treasure and dignity of the immortal soul, and he made this discovery for us by making it in himself. "Believe that you are a child of God, and live like one!" is his message. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Now, when we

read the story of Jesus thus, and realize it as a veritable human experience, he becomes the source of moral inspiration to the whole race. His method becomes the typical method. He is, in a profound and spiritual sense, the way, the truth, and the life. Believing in him as real, his experience is felt to be real, and it means something that stirs the very depths in us when he says, "Follow me."

Are we indeed created as Jesus in the very elements of our nature? Is God our Father *in the same sense* as He is his? Does the universe stand pledged by immutable law to answer to our faith in degree and kind as it did to his? Is the law of moral growth, of spiritual increase, the same for us as it was for him? Is the same law of exultant service, of companionship with God, of love like God's, given to us as an invitation, an allurement, that was given to Jesus? So we reverently, triumphantly believe. We believe it because Christ believed it; because it explains for us so much more than any other conception of the moral universe. We believe it because it is worthy of God. We believe it because, when once interiorly and lovingly apprehended, it is a truth immeasurably affecting and personal, drawing us, if I may so speak, to the very bosom of Infinite Love in an abandon of trust. That the God and Father of Jesus is our God and Father, ready in all the plenitude of a universe to be our lover and friend, is indeed an infinitely affecting truth.

And here it is that the right apprehension of Jesus' experience has vital significance. In a different tone from that of the Nazareth people we may ask the question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Did not one of our mortal race find God so dear, so faithful, so true a lover? Did not one such grow from trust to trust, and receive the very fulness of the divine intent in man into his breast? And does he not tell me that his is in verity the path,

the law of the spirit for every one willing to enter it, and that the Father of the universe answers each trust and effort by the omnipotent laws of grace and help; that there is a heavenly conspiracy of Truth with the true, and of Love with the loving?

Tell me, friends, does not such a conception bring thoughts too deep for tears? For myself, under an inconceivable burden of gratitude and adoring reverence, I can say that it seems to answer to the very springs of my being. *It is a justifying faith.* I mean it adjusts itself so simply, so grandly to all else I know and see of the universe. It is interpreter of so much that dimly stirs my heart, and answers my thought, as I look out or in, upon the solemnity, the mystery of life. I exult to feel this conception of the religion, the experience of Jesus, fit to the unity of the universe. I exult with tenderest thankfulness, not with pride, to see this larger faith displacing the provisional one. It is rising outside of our body in the great minds of England, India, Germany, and America. I rejoice, and believe that Jesus rejoices in that hour, which is coming and now is, when the world shall enter upon the real meaning of his experience, and receive from it a springtide of moral enthusiasm masterful and passionately deep. I exult, yet as one humbled under the gift, that the trust of such a truth is committed in part to us, of the Spirit, in hope that as Jesus' ministers we may impart it to others. And I yearn for the day when our loved church throughout this land, when Unitarians in name, shall have awakened to all the meaning of this trust. Surrounded by the thick columns of Orthodoxy, driven in on ourselves, forced to a defensive attitude, fiercely watched and misinterpreted, our adjustment to a God-given mission has been, oh, so difficult, so warped to poor human weaknesses, and has fallen far short of the

inherent inspiration of conviction; not but that the record, humanly speaking, has had luminous places, and prophets and martyrs, but we have been cumbered, half emancipated, "dwelling in tents." Now "the city that hath foundations" is nearing us. There has been a transition period in which jealousy of ourselves, and fear of being misunderstood by others, held us back from preaching the person of Jesus as the rock of our faith. Many of our ministry, especially those who came to us from other folds, by a mental reaction were timid of using language so often abused, — the language of devoted faith and discipleship to Christ. That language our ministers forbore to use, because in the world's sense and hearing it was thought to mean their meaning, — an idolatrous one.

But we are nearing our own truth, apprehending it, and realizing that the person of Jesus of Nazareth, his *human personality, is the key and inspiration of our mission;* that we are called to be prophets in the new dispensation, new, yet eternal, and which was ever waiting for discovery, — the dispensation in which the "world is God's scripture, and His Son is Mankind;" a dispensation of which Jesus, truly apprehended, is indeed the great high-priest, the human Jesus, whom we may love and reverence forever, because he first made entire proof of our nature and found it like God's.

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By Goldwin Smith

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By Octavius B. Frothingham

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TRANSCENDENTALISM IN NEW ENGLAND

By Octavius B. Frothingham

Size, 5 3-4 x 7 3-4; pages, 395; price, $1.00 *net;* postage, 16 cents.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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[No. 78]

HOW TO DIE.

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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HOW TO DIE.

Does it seem strange to any, perhaps incongruous, that on this June Sunday, in the midst of a growing world, where everything is thrilling with life, I should take for a topic a subject like "How to Die"? And yet the beauty of June, and the joy that our hearts feel in it, are not interfered with because we know they are to be followed by November; for we know that after the November there is to be another June. But, though there were to be no other June, yet, if we could so consider the subject of November as to take away something of the gloom and the shadow that are apt to haunt us in connection with the thought that all that is beautiful and all that we love must fade, even then a consideration of it might possibly add to the brightness of the day, might possibly help us even to enjoy more keenly the glory of spring. So, if I can take away, by any considerations that I may offer, something of the foreboding, something of the shadow, something of the dread of dying, may I not put it within your power to find even a sweeter, keener, more restful relish in those things of life that are so desirable, and that we clasp to our arms with such a tender sense of possession?

It is a purpose like this that I have in mind. We have inherited — I cannot go at any length into the causes of it — a series of fancies, of forebodings, of dark traditions, that surround the thought of the transition through which we must all pass from this life to what we hope is to be

another, that fill our minds with gloom. Death is figured to us under every possible aspect of horror. He is the shapeless, headless image, son of Sin and Satan who stands by the portal of hell, as Lucifer starts out on his journey in search of the new created earth. He stands there, gloating with the awful anticipation that his famine, his hunger for human life, by the ministry of sin and evil, is going at last to be filled. We have pictured death under the figure of skull and crossbones: we have made him a skeleton with scythe and hour-glass, and brandishing a dreadful dart; we have clothed him with all sorts of horrors, — until, at the very mention of his name, we think only of decay, of pain, of separation, of everything from which the loving heart as well as the living flesh shrinks.

Let us see if we can find some other way of looking at death, and try to discover what is the reasonable method of considering this inevitable fact in every human career.

Believing, as I do, that death is not the end of life, but only an incident in it, it seems to me pre-eminently fitting that I should close this series of sermons on "Helps for Daily Living" by a consideration of the question "How to Die."

At the outset, then, let us dwell for a little while on the alternative. If it were not death, since we are here, then what would it have to be? We shrink sometimes from a disagreeable fact without stopping to consider whether the alternative of that fact might not be something quite as disagreeable, if not more so. Suppose, for instance, that I could have conferred upon me at this moment the gift of physical immortality here on this planet, or the privilege of living here as long as the planet should endure: unless there were conferred upon me the gift of immortal youth at the same time, it would be something unspeakably horrible to grow old, decrepit, to find my faculties fading, one

after another, and still not have the power to die, not be able to rid myself of the growing burden of weakness and of pain.

But suppose, along with the gift of immortality, I should also have conferred upon me, and upon me alone, the gift of eternal youth. Then what? Why, then, it seems to me, the alternative would be hardly less endurable. I, indeed, might be young, with capacity and possibility of enjoyment, of a keen relish for the beauty of sky and the delights of earth; and yet I should pass through an experience, only intensified beyond expression, such as many who had not my prolonged existence on earth had passed through. One after another those I love would go, and I should find myself by and by with only half a dozen persons that I knew in my childhood or youth. Then there would be five, four, three, two, and then one; and at last I must see that one go and I be left alone, compelled to make new acquaintances, or else to wander like the Wandering Jew, one of the most grewsome and horrible imaginations of all ages, alone and homeless in the world, — to become an antiquated curiosity, the representative of a long-past age. Why, since the very meaning, the very heart and soul of life, is the companionship of people for whom we care, it seems to me that under these conditions any one of us would pray for death as he never prayed for life, — pray to go with a friend. Think me not irreverent when I say I would take my chances rather to go anywhere with a friend than to stay here under such conditions. Hell itself might be conceived of as endurable with a friend, yet not even heaven without one.

Take another supposition. Suppose all of us who are alive on earth could have immediately conferred upon us the gift of continued existence here on our planet. What then? Why, we would set all the bells ringing, we would be jubilant and glad for awhile. But let the years go on,

and by and by the world would become full, with no more room for any more people. Then no more marriages, no more homes, no more little children, none of the laughter and joy and wonder of childish lives growing up around our feet. A world full of grown people! But what next? After awhile, we would exhaust the planet: we would see everything that was to be seen, we would do everything that anybody could do, we would learn everything that anybody could learn, we would go through all experiences that anybody could understand or appreciate. And then what? Think of yourself snow-blocked at some way-station, and finding a small cottage or tavern where you could rest and keep warm and wait! Then think of yourself as compelled to stay there for an indefinite time! You would read all the books, you would do everything you could think of to pass away the time; but then a day would come when a prison even in exchange would be glad relief, so weary would you be of it all. So, I take it, that, even if we could have immortality here on these terms, we should become so weary of it at last that it would be unendurable. The only thing that could make such a dream as this bearable would be that in some way we might be endowed with faculties and powers to visit other planets, to visit other earths, to move through the deeps of space. But that, we know, would be physically impossible, clothed with such bodies as we now possess. It is conceivable scientifically, perfectly conceivable, that we might be endowed with faculties and powers adapting us to the doing of just this; but a necessary condition of that would be just this "horrible" thing that we call death. We must get rid of this body first, must be clothed upon with some other kind of body.

I cannot, then, think of any alternative to dying, as I consider it carefully and look over the world, that seems to me in the least attractive. So I am brought face to face with this question: If we believe in God, are we not

forced to the conclusion that, however we understand it or do not understand it, death must somehow be a good and blessed thing, and not an evil? If there be wisdom in this universe controlling and guiding it, then that wisdom knows best. If there be power, then that power cannot be hindered. If there be love, then that love desires the best. Such a being as that would not, could not, appoint to any of his children anything that in its nature was necessarily evil; and death has been appointed to every one of his children. It seems to me, then, that, if we cherish, if we dare fold to our hearts this trust, we must take along with it that which is its inevitable corollary, — the trust that death, also, is a good thing and not an evil thing.

I ask you to bear with me now while I consider a few of the things that have intensified the natural fear of dissolution.

One of the first things is an inherited tradition as to the origin and cause of death. One of the foolish and utterly baseless fancies of the Hebrews was that death came into the world as the result of sin; that, if Adam had not transgressed at the outset, then there would have been no such thing as dying. But we know that this is purely a fancy, and that death, whatever else we may think about it, is a natural and necessary incident of our career, created as a part of the original plan by the very One who preordained the fact of birth.

Death, then, is not a finality, not an end. We are not to think of it as a sign of the wrath of God, as his laying his hand upon us in the way of punishment. It is nothing of the sort. We have been haunted by this idea which we have inherited from the old theology. Some of us who think we are rid of the last shred of that old theology still have somewhere hidden away in brain or nerve the haunting images and shadows of this old idea. So, when we

think of death, we think of ourselves as perhaps criminals, under penalty, led into the presence of the judge to receive our sentence: and this suggests the prison, the scaffold, the black cap, and the execution. But these ideas belong to a conception of the universe, of the government of the universe, and our relation to God, which is utterly baseless.

Then it seems to me that we allow ourselves to be troubled in a way for which there is no foundation by the anticipation of pain as accompanying death. We talk about the struggle, the death struggle, the death agony, the last keen pain and anguish; and yet I verily believe that there is not a person here this morning who has not suffered, over and over again, a dozen, perhaps a hundred, times more than any one of you is ever likely to suffer in the process of death. Study and experience and watching by death-beds has convinced me of one fact, — I believe it to be a fact, I believe that almost every educated physician, as the result of wide experience, would agree with me, — that the act of death is generally painless. There is pain, there is suffering, in the disease that leads up to it; but there is suffering in those diseases from which we recover. There is a natural process of anæsthesia in the approach to the moment of death, so I believe that almost always it is simply falling asleep. Though we stand by the side of a friend who is dying, and watch the involuntary muscular movement, the contraction of the brow, the quivering of the lip, — signs that seem to us to indicate pain, — if we could really know, there is hardly a question that, in almost all cases, these movements are merely nervous, muscular, automatic, unconscious. They do not mean that there is any such suffering as we are apt to think. So I believe that in most cases we have suffered more a dozen times over, even in the dreams that have come to us in our sleep, than we shall ever suffer in dying.

Then is it not true that most of us are haunted by a sort of grewsome and uncanny fancy connected with the grave? I think I should be rendering humanity a service if I could only get these fancies, these imaginations, completely out of people's minds. My childhood was spent close by a cemetery, so that it was one of the most familiar objects of those days; but I know that I was always haunted with a certain imaginary horror in the thought of burial. Is it not true that sometimes we stand by an open grave and have a sense of suffocation, or smothering, at the thought that we sometime must be placed under the sod? And yet how shrewd in its humor as well as in its sense was that word of Socrates, who, when his friends asked him how they should bury him, answered, "Bury me in any way you please, if you can only catch me!" I do not expect to be buried. We have worn three, or four, or five, or six complete human bodies that are not ours now. Why not suffer from the thought as to what has become of them? They are buried somewhere, or passed into grass and flowers and trees. I do not expect to suffer any more from this one being buried than I suffer already from any one of them. Let us put away from us, then, all these artificial horrors and imaginations. I think this matter of burial is made a matter of peculiar fear by our still barbaric burial customs. I have no time to go into this subject now; but, if I had, I should have a good deal to say, a good many earnest protests to utter. I think in the matter of burial and the associations surrounding it we are not yet half civilized.

Again, we are haunted still, as Hamlet was, by the fear of that "something after death." What? If we believed, as we have been taught for centuries, that this life is only a probation, and that when we have crossed the dead line our conditions for good or ill are fixed forever, then, indeed, we might tremble. I wonder that those who hold

these ideas do not tremble more than they do. I remember persons who have come within the range of my pastoral experience in past years, who have been generally the noblest, sweetest, most refined, most sensitive persons, who carried a year-long horror in the thought that possibly the hope they cherished of the safety of their own souls was a mistake, so that they looked upon the thought of death with terror, lest they should wake up to find that the lurid cloud of God's wrath still overhung their souls. But we do not believe that any longer. We believe that the same God, the same law, the same right, the same wrong, the same possibility of going downward or going upward, that we find here, will be found over there.

I do not believe that there is anything, then, about death that in the least changes our characters, our natures, our possibilities, our tendencies, or sets us in any different relation to God, any more than there was about going to sleep last night and waking up this morning. Five minutes after death we are what we were five minutes before death; and it is the same God, the same universe, the same laws, the same conditions, the same possibilities there as here. Let us, then, put aside that haunting fear. If you are not afraid of to-morrow, then you ought not to be afraid of the to-morrow of death. The inexorable judgment, the conditions that attach to our characters and actions, which have followed us from birth until to-day, will follow us from to-day into to-morrow. One and the same law governs the matter of our passing into the next world, as we call it, and this.

But many liberals who have put that fear away are still haunted by another fear. I know many tender, loving souls who shrink from going out into that other life. Why? Because it seems to them like leaving a cosey home. Here is a bright fire, and we sit round it with

our friends. We can touch hands, we can speak to each other. There are associations and companionships here; and people shrink from leaving them, as they would shrink from being put out of such a home as I have pictured into the dark ways of the night, in a strange land, not knowing which way to go nor what the next step would be. So I think there are persons who dread going out into that great world alone. Who is over there? Whom shall we meet? What kind of a place will it be? It seems so desolate, so vast; and they turn from the thought, and rush clinging back to the friends here, as a frightened child rushes to grasp the skirts of its mother.

We must learn to trust. We lived before we became conscious of it. When we came into this world, we found ourselves in the hands of loving, tender care. I do not believe that a God who provides such a reception for us as we had here will leave us without as good a reception when we go away. All of us have friends over there. I hope they know all about it, and are getting ready for us. I believe, at any rate, that the infinite tenderness and care will guard us and help us. It seems to me that we need right here to get rid of our inherited notions as to the great gulf between life here and life over yonder. People have apparently thought that life, if there is to be one there, is utterly distinct and separate from this, unlike it. Why do you think so? Because we have our heads full of the pictures of traditional angels with wings. Is there any sense in thinking of people's wearing wings over there? It is utterly incongruous, a part of the mythology of the past, absurd on the very face of it. We think of them as dressed in long robes, until they suggest to us nothing but the ghosts that frightened our childish imaginations. Is there any reason for thinking of them in this way? Not in the least. We talk about cherubim and seraphim with faces so bright that we cannot look upon

them without being dazzled. Is there anything but poetry in that thought? Is a person spiritually better or morally higher by being turned into a being upon whom one cannot look with open eyes? Let us get rid of all these conventional notions, and think of the people over there as real folk, just like ourselves, just as human, just as real, just as companionable. I would not wish to go if I thought otherwise.

Let us, then, get rid of all these hauntings about Death as a spectre, and think of him as God's angel. What does angel mean? Merely a messenger, merely somebody sent on an errand, who need not be dressed in white nor ornamented with wings. To be a messenger is to be an angel.

I wish to close this part of my sermon by reading to you a suggestion of the kind of thought you should hold about death. It is by Mr. Edward Rowland Sill: —

"What if some morning, when the stars were paling,
And the dawn whitened, and the east was clear,
Strange peace and rest fell on me from the presence
Of a benignant Spirit standing near;

"And I should tell him, as he stood beside me:
'This is our Earth, most friendly Earth and fair;
Daily its sea and shore through sun and shadow
Faithful it turns, robed in its azure air.

"'There is blest living here, loving and serving,
And quest of truth, and serene friendships dear;
But stay not, Spirit! Earth has one destroyer, —
His name is Death. Flee, lest he find thee here!'

"And what if then, while the still morning brightened
And freshened in the elm the summer's breath,
Should gravely smile on me the gentle angel,
And take my hand, and say, 'My name is Death.'"

With this thought, then, as to what death is, I turn to consider for a moment a few things bearing on the method of getting ready to die. How shall we prepare for it?

I would not have you trouble your minds for one single instant with any of the old ideas as to getting ready for death. Dying is easy enough: it is living that I have found to be hard, — living ideally, nobly, truly. I find more trouble in living in one single day than I ever expect to find in dying.

What shall we do, then, in getting ready for death? The first thing — and a very commonplace thing it is — is to live rightly, healthfully; for a very large part of that which makes death hard, to our thinking, is the pain that precedes and accompanies it. A large part of the suffering that precedes and accompanies death, in most instances, is the result of our own careless or wilful breaking of the laws of health before we come to die. As Bryant sings of his old man, —

> "No chronic tortures racked his aged limb,
> For luxury and sloth had nourished none for him."

If we were perfectly healthy, I think the most of us would grow old and die as naturally as a leaf fades in the fall. It would be as quiet a process as the sunset. Most of the storm and trouble linked with it are the results of our own thoughts and words and deeds.

The second suggestion I would make is that we make up our minds to die but once, and to die all at once when the time comes, and not be twenty or thirty or forty years about it. I think the most of us die in imagination over and over again, and suffer a great deal more in the process than we shall in the actual fact when we come to face it. Suppose Damocles's sword is hanging over my head, and I know it. It is going to fall only once. I cannot prevent it, and I cannot reach it to take it down. I do not know when it is going to fall; but let me go about

my business. It does not concern me, since I cannot help myself. Let us leave that out of mind, and only see to it how we live; and the matter as to how we are to die will take care of itself.

Then, in the third place, I think that the sorrows that accompany death, and that we link with the thought of it, are sometimes keenest of all because we have done or said certain things, or if we had not done or said certain things, that touched the person who is gone. The keenest pang about the fact of death with a great many people, if they would unbosom themselves and tell the secrets of their hearts, would be certain remembrances. I did not speak such words as I ought to have spoken while my friend could hear me. I did not tell that friend how dear he was, how I loved him. I did not make him know how large a part of my life he was, how I depended on him. If I could only tell him now! If I had only told him then, it would have made his life so much brighter, so much cheerier. Or we remember bitter, spiteful words spoken, that we would give so much if we could take back; and we wonder if, even there on the other side, he remembers it. We wonder if it remains a tiny, bitter drop even in his cup of bliss.

The way, then, for us to get ready to die, as it seems to me, is to begin this minute — not thinking much about death, except as an inevitable fact somewhere in the future — to live just as we shall wish we had lived; speak to-day the words that we shall wish we had spoken if some friend dies to-day and goes beyond our reach; do the things we shall wish we had done; love so that the living shall understand our love. Let them know how much they are to us. Let them taste the sweet comfort of it as we go along.

Death is either one of two things. Let us for a moment consider it under its very worst aspect. If it is the end

of life, if none of those who have lived on this planet are living now, if we must join this great army of silence, then at the very worst it is only sleeping. It will not be pain. There will be no regret, there will be nothing. If not that, then it certainly is this other thing that I have spoken of and that I believe. And if it is that, then no words can overpicture it, no poet can oversing it, no music can oversuggest it. Why, sometimes I have such an intense feeling of curiosity about that other life! And yet I do not want to leave here until my time comes. But I am glad to think that, when I do leave here, I shall not go away beyond the possibility of knowing how this dear old world that I love so much is getting on. There is only one century that I would rather be an inhabitant of than the present one, and that is the next. I do not care to live in any one that is past, but I would like to see the next one. I would like to see how some of these movements that are going on will come out, — what will be the changes in the social, the religious, the political life; what the next step in discovery, in conquest, of this wonderful earth of ours will be. And, if the end is not eternal silence, I expect to know. I expect to keep the run of these movements, even if I go to some distant planet. If I am engaged in work that will take me to a distance, I will get the news, or I will come back again now and then and see for myself. If that theory is true, just think of it for a moment! How would you enjoy seeing gathered in some great hall to-day the company of all the immortals that have distinguished the history of our race by their physical, their intellectual, their moral, or their spiritual glories? How would you like to look upon the face of Shakspeare, to see if Dante has got rid of that sadness that he wore, to talk with Goethe, to hear the music of Mozart and Mendelssohn? If this theory is true, we shall meet all these: we shall find them, and so have in our

grasp all the past of the earth and watch the growth of all the future. No wonder that Socrates' mind kindled at the thought, and he said, "If this be so, then let me die again and again," — if this be the condition.

Such, then, being to my mind the best way of getting ready to die, I wish to close by reading to you a poem, the authorship of which I do not know, but which seems to state in beautiful words this attitude in which we ought to stand towards the question of death: —

"If I were told that I must die to-morrow,
That the next sun
Which sinks should bear me past all fear and sorrow
For any one,
All the fight fought and all the journey through,
What should I do?

"I do not think that I should shrink or falter,
But just go on
Doing my work, nor change, nor seek to alter
Aught that is gone;
But rise and move and love and smile and pray
For one more day.

"And, lying down at night for a last sleeping,
Say in that ear
Which hearkens ever, 'Lord, within thy keeping,
How should I fear?
And, when to-morrow brings Thee nearer still,
Do Thou Thy will.'

"I might not sleep, for awe; but peaceful, tender,
My soul would lie
All the night long; and, when the morning splendor
Flashed o'er the sky,
I think that I could smile, could calmly say,
'It is His day.'

"But if a wondrous hand from the blue yonder
Held out a scroll
On which my life was writ, and I with wonder
Beheld unroll
To a long century's end its mystic clew,
What should I do?

"What could I do, O blessed Guide and Master,
Other than this, —
Still to go on as now, not slower, faster,
Nor fear to miss
The road, although so very long it be,
While led by Thee?

"Step by step, feeling Thou art close beside me,
Although unseen;
Through thorns, through flowers, whether tempest hide Thee
Or heavens serene;
Assured Thy faithfulness cannot betray,
Nor love decay.

"I may not know, my God: no hand revealeth
Thy counsels wise;
Along the path no deepening shadow stealeth;
No voice replies
To all my questioning thoughts, the time to tell;
And it is well.

"Let me keep on abiding and unfearing
Thy will always,
Through a long century's ripe fruition
Or a short day's.
Thou canst not come too soon; and I can wait,
If Thou come late."

IMMORTALITY, and Other Essays

By Charles Carroll Everett

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 280; price, $1.20 *net;* postage, 11 cents.

THE late Dean of the Harvard Divinity School has given us many scholarly essays on religious and philosophical subjects. Dr. Everett's penetrating and analytical mind, with his ideas expressed in clear and simple yet finished style, lends to all his writings an interest and charm not always associated with the topics discussed. The two previous volumes of his essays have omitted considerable excellent material worthy of a more permanent form of preservation than the periodicals in which it appeared, and it is from this source that the following essays have been chosen for the contents of the present volume: "Immortality," "The Known and the Unknowable in Religion," "Mysticism," "The Gain of History," "The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith," "Joseph Priestley," "The Philosophy of the Sublime," "Spencer's Reconciliation of Science and Religion."

SPARK IN THE CLOD, THE

A Study in Evolution. By J. T. Sunderland

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2 inches; pages, 230; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

IN this examination into evolutionary processes and the effect of our modern knowledge of them upon our intellectual, moral, and religious conceptions, the author takes us back to the earth's formation, where the order of creation, so far as it is of human concern, begins. Then, after the lapse of ages, man and his evolution become visible parts of this world-process, involving the problems of pain and evil, of God and the soul and immortality. Rational application of accepted facts of science is made to the world of religious ideas, and the necessary modification in the old conceptions of things is clearly pointed out. Finally, regarding human destiny and the hope of immortality, the author reasons from what man has been to what, in the rationality of nature, he must be; for "all evolution is at once a history and a prophecy."

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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[No. 79]

THE REAL JESUS.

BY

REV. HOWARD N. BROWN

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
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"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

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THE REAL JESUS.

What think ye of Christ? — Matt. xxii. 42.

We are sometimes asked whether if Jesus of Nazareth were now to appear among us, teaching as he taught almost two thousand years ago, there is the smallest likelihood that he would be received and welcomed to-day as a divinely appointed leader of mankind. It is no doubt true that there are many among his professed followers, perhaps even a majority, who would fail to see in the actual living man such qualities as they have ascribed to the Christ of their theology. But the question, as it is commonly asked, is hardly a fair one. Every great man of the past would be a somewhat strange object to our eyes, if he could come back to earth clothed in the habits and customs of the age in which he lived. Suppose a man were to be born out of our modern life with the spirit and character and thought of Jesus, all that was incidental to that far-off time and place being changed for what is incidental to our time and place; is there any reason to doubt that he would be joyfully and widely received by us as a true prophet of the soul? If there is reason to doubt this, it must be because the world is now so far advanced as to render the moral and spiritual genius of Jesus not particularly noticeable when compared with the attainments of the modern mind. But are we not apt to exaggerate

the achievements of recent years far beyond their rightful importance as measured against life's highest qualities and attributes? Almost all the wonderful advance of science upon which we pride ourselves has taken place since Shakspeare's day. We now know many things that were undiscovered when he wrote; but does any one feel that his ignorance of these matters constitutes a serious blemish on Shakspeare's genius? Does our superior knowledge lift us so near the level of his rare insight and wonderful command of language that we cease to hold his magnificent gifts in reverence? Now and again one hears the opinion that Shakspeare is a much overrated poet; but it does not come from any source at all likely to enlighten us as to what true poetry is. If Jesus has anything like the greatness of soul that has been attributed to him, the world has as yet made no advance which brings him down to the level of ordinary human nature.

No mind at the present time is well qualified to form a judgment on this question unless it carefully guards itself from the intrusion of popular prejudices that abound on both sides. One false extreme always begets an opposite false extreme, and the truth between the two only appears to him who can emancipate himself from the passions of controversy. We see, for example, that when the English church had sunk deep into idolatrous practices under the Stuart kings, the natural result was the rise of a Puritan party which made war upon all that was beautiful in religion. We denounce and deplore the idolatry that then filled the Church; but equally we lament the mad zeal of Cromwell's soldiers, who wasted and destroyed treasures which cannot now be replaced, and established a traditional belief in the virtue of ugliness which even yet it is hard for their successors to shake off. So with one portion of the world holding absurd and superstitious views of the

nature of Christ, and making their lip-service of his name everywhere unpleasantly prominent, it is natural that for the time being an opposing class should arise, which seeks to destroy, not only the idolatry, but that which men have made the idol of their thoughts. Never were Christians more stanch than they who founded the New England Commonwealth; but when these men observed in their churches people who longed for unlawful rites, covertly making courtesies at every mention of the name of Jesus that occurred in the Puritan service, they were shocked and horrified. What wonder, then, if in our minds the old Adam of rage and resentment rises with some vigor when we still see a formal reverence paid to the name of Christ which is denied to the name that stands for the Infinite Father of all souls! While there is a religion unspiritual enough to raise this human image higher in its reverence than the thought of an unembodied Deity, we may expect to witness the manifestation of an anti-Christian sentiment, which is but the rebound from one to another false extreme. But they who care more for truth than for controversy or partisan success will be as slow to join an anti- as an ultra-Christian cry. The present disposition of many minds to throw off the Christian name does not stand for the sober second thought of free inquiry. It is rather a somewhat too passionate revolt from forms of Christianity that are merely conventional and traditional, and will in the end, we may confidently expect, take up again with gratitude and pride much that it now flings aside.

There is another reason why it is difficult for some people at the present time to form a just estimate of the life of Christ. The world does not advance along all lines of progress at the same time, but its energies tend rather to run out so exclusively in special directions that in other ways there is temporarily a positive decline. Now the

scientific spirit so rules our day as to occasion a very noticeable decline of what, for want of a better title, we may call the spiritual imagination, — the power to appreciate life on its poetic side, and to read that language of symbols which is the only speech whereby the finest and highest faculties of the soul have ever succeeded in uttering themselves. There is certainly no reason why a man may not be at the same time a good mechanical engineer and a good musician; but no one will maintain that a course of instruction and training in engineering makes one a good musician. There is no reason why one may not be at the same time scientific and religious; but it does not follow that by scientific studies he can awaken and train those powers of the mind which have hitherto found in religion a source of unspeakable joy and strength. It is often said that there should be, and can be, no conflict between science and religion, in so far as both lay hold upon the truth. But it may nevertheless be true that by reason of the different language which they speak science and religion may sadly fail to understand each other, and may be betrayed into much needless antagonism. Looking back to past centuries, we can see that religion, when it held almost undisputed sway of the world, failed utterly to understand the rising power of science, whose early apostles it imprisoned and killed. Now that science has grown to take equal, and perhaps superior, command of the intellectual forces of the age, it also fails to understand and appreciate religion.

Let me beseech those who have been born into a world that has become suddenly somewhat new and strange to many whose heads are not yet white, that they will give this point careful and candid consideration. It is all very well to erect statues and sing hymns to the martyred Bruno, and to felicitate ourselves that we have escaped

the tyranny under which he suffered. But as earnest men and women, facing the deep problems of life and death and immortality, let us not think that we can thus escape or satisfy the hunger of our souls. I charge that under the rule of the modern scientific spirit the noblest power of humanity, that of spiritual imagination, has fallen somewhat into decline; and if, as it sometimes seems, the life and words of Christ are losing their hold upon us, it is not the intellectual greatness, but this spiritual defect of the time which largely accounts for that fact.

Did not that truly great man, Charles Darwin, — great with all his narrowness and pathetic limitations, — confess that his love of music and poetry had been starved out of him during his long life of exclusive devotion to scientific observation and experiment? Through long disuse a most important part of his nature had become no better than a withered arm, and he had ceased to be either a judge or a critic of two great arts that have always displayed wonderful power to move the souls of men. One is not making random accusations, but has the warrant of deliberate confessions made by competent witnesses, in saying that to very many minds the whole realm of religious conviction and enthusiasm is now as a sealed book. They do not know what it means that their fellows are stirred by such religious emotions as appear to take hold upon them. They have no power to enter into or measure the ideas which evidently have controlled some of the greatest intellects. The trouble is that they attempt to read the creeds of their fellows as if these were — what the ignorant assume them to be — scientific statements or descriptions of spiritual realities; whereas these creeds are, so far as they are anything worth serious consideration mere, figurative expressions, — more or less adequate symbols of what no man is able to define in exact scientific

fashion. It is easy to see what the creeds of Calvinism say, and how they read to the literal mind; but it is not so easy to see what Calvinism meant to those strong-hearted men who fought the battle of liberty throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though it evidently stood for something more than the stupid literalism from which the Church of our day is trying to escape.

Of course, it does not follow that the beliefs which have once served the spiritual imagination can be made to serve forever. But none the less we foolishly defraud ourselves if we will not allow our spiritual imagination to speak; and in the nature of the case its speech must be, not the language of science, but that of religious poetry. We of this time easily acquire a too superstitious regard for what we call facts, easily fall victims to a morbid fear of being deceived by the symbols that stand for unutterable truths. Go place yourself before Raphael's great masterpiece, that most devout picture of saintly motherhood, and try to "understand" its charm! Discover, if you are able, what trick of drawing or coloring it is that so witches the eyes and the hearts of all beholders! So far as this secret is concerned, you will have, I think, your labor for your pains, and will probably find in the midst of your straining analysis that for the time being the picture has lost its power to charm. So, it appears to me, there is a type of the modern mind which stands before the portrait of Christ, its curious gaze so bent to discover what it calls the "historic facts" that it is temporarily blind to the great flood of sublime thoughts and feelings which has streamed from that wondrous symbol upon the hearts of many Christian generations. It is a great mistake to think that reverence for that great and stainless life is a sign of mediæval aims and tendencies. The world moves fast, but not fast enough to allow us to class a man like

Theodore Parker with an outworn conservatism; and he was one who clung to the divine truth and beauty in the life of Christ as the very soul and basis of what is best in our world of to-day.

If one declares it to be part of his artistic creed that the so-called Venus of Milo is only an ordinary production of the sculptor's chisel, and that the marble forms which adorn our cemeteries and parks are quite equal or superior to that ancient work, perhaps nothing can be said to him save that the enlightened perceptions of the world at large are not likely to endorse his verdict. To that enlightened judgment of mankind, they who think they see in the life of Christ an excellence that places him spiritually first among men, may confidently appeal. Though the portrait of that life which has come down to us is sadly defaced and incomplete, yet there is something in this broken image which easily surpasses the grace and majesty of every other figure in history. What need to ask, or how shall we determine whether he was absolutely sinless and infallible? It is enough if we see that his spirit and thought clearly mark the loftiest height to which human life has attained, and behold in him the qualities that are at last to redeem and regenerate our race. The question whether we may rightfully behold such pre-eminence in him is not to be settled alone by any amount of criticism applied to the details of the Gospel narrative. After this criticism has done its work, the question still recurs, What impression, taken as a whole, in view of what it was and what it accomplished, does this life make upon our minds?

A famous author belonging to our own period, who hated every kind of sham with a perfect hatred, and must not be lightly accused of indulging in feigned emotion, once visited Jerusalem. Of course he went to the Church

of the Holy Sepulchre, and to the alleged tomb of Jesus; "into which," he says, "be it authentic or not, no man can enter without a shock of breathless fear, and deep and awful self-humiliation." A life which so clings to the scenes among which its forces were spent that nearly two thousand years after it was ended, a man like Thackeray was moved to this confession of its command over his heart, must be worthy the profoundest study; and if we can in any degree fathom the secret of that life and of its power over men, it will be knowledge of the most helpful and instructive kind. That secret I think it is not hard to find, though it is not easily told in adequate language. Some hint of it we may try to communicate; only let it be remembered that the simplest things of life are often hardest to describe, and that the experience of the soul goes much deeper than words have power to follow.

Jesus himself summed up the Law and the Prophets in this one phrase, Love God and man. For him, this was the root of all duty, the crown and completion of all character. If he lived out this maxim, he succeeded in reaching what was to him the summit of human excellence. He did live out this maxim; and passing by all minor considerations, we may take that as the true key to what he was and what he has accomplished.

Nowhere else, it appears to me, either in the annals of history or among the creations of the poetic imagination, have we the record or the image of a human soul so completely governed in all its acts and thoughts by a love for man so perfect and divine. Such freshness, spontaneity, and intensity of spiritual impulse cannot easily arise out of our modern life. Of necessity, the continuance of intellectual growth has made us too self-conscious; and it will be long yet ere the completed cycle of spiritual development brings us to a point where the

race can once more live out, easily and naturally, the higher impulses of the soul. No studied action can equal the perfect grace of a young child's gestures, which are made in entire unconsciousness of self; and the trained student of human nature should look instinctively for the best example of a life shaped and guided by incarnate love, in an age nearer than our own to the childhood of the world. It should be as evident to him that the best conditions for such a life are found in that earlier time, as it is to the botanist that a certain flower will thrive best in some particular latitude. This warm, deep tide of wonderful love; this outpouring of a flood of divine compassion over the world's want and wretchedness; this entire devotion of the heart to the good of one's fellow-men, — leaving no room for any trace of vengeful feeling or desire, — all this is high above us, almost as the heavens are high above the earth. It would be most unjust and unfair, in the light of such knowledge of other religions as we now possess, to say that nowhere else is there any approach to the perfect love of Christ. We should hold no quarrel, even with one who thinks he sees in other great saints who have been loving and stainless, the equal of Christ's perfections. It is a question only of what one sees, and let us expect no man to report otherwise than as his vision dictates. To me it seems that there is in the love of Christ distinctly a more healthful tone, as compared with those who may be called in some sense his peers. The suspicion of something morbid in their hearts, I do not find in him. He did not merely pity men for their wrongs; he loved them for the godlike capacities he saw in them. He did not look up to the heavens in anger, indignation, or despair for the wrongs suffered here below, but only in patient confidence that these would be at last redressed. He looked upon the

imperfect hearts of men, his brethren, as the gardener may look upon his plants. He loved them for the beauty they might unfold, and he longed with passionate earnestness to help the Almighty Father in lifting up and strengthening their feeble life. Many others have loved in this fashion, — praised be the name of the Lord. But in the love of Christ, there is a steadfastness, an intensity, and a serenity quite beyond any other human source from which this wondrous light of the spirit has shined upon us.

But still more clear and unquestionable is his supremacy, when we come to speak of his love toward God. Then we must give him a place so much higher than all others, where he stands so unmistakably kinglike in his sole superiority, that we are ready to bow our hearts before him with the words "Lord and Master" upon our lips. None other has lived in such perfect consciousness of a divine presence within and round about him. None other has so walked with God, or so felt his spirit blended in intimate communion with the Infinite. Never in word or deed is he found shut up within his own individual self, but always he shows us his deep feeling that self-hood is linked with Deity. Who can wonder at the tendency to worship him, since he so lived in and breathed forth a divine atmosphere that his disciples felt, when under the spell of his personal influence, they were, as nowhere else, in the presence of God. Though their own sight was too dim to see all that was revealed to him, yet when he spoke to them of the Father's kingdom, in such accents of authority as only sight could give, they also, with the eye of faith, saw a world divinely made and governed, and a future bright with the promises which infinite love and goodness supply. No other life began to disclose to them, nor is there any other which unfolds to us, such sustained and unclouded consciousness of union with the

life of God. Many philosophers have taught the immanence of the divine presence; but no other has so lived in this truth and felt its kindling power in every smallest movement of will and thought and desire.

And this, the true glory of the life of Christ, is the chief glory of all human existence, so far as men are able to attain it. The real measure of a human soul is the extent to which it has come into rightful relations with the existence beyond itself. We have all partially adjusted ourselves to some small fraction of the universe, and we feel transient intimations of bonds that knit our spirits into close and unbroken relationship with the Universal Life. Here was one who felt that widest bond of union as vividly and as deeply as we realize any of the special relationships that join us to our fellow-men. His soul therefore reflected, not merely an image of the kingdom of heaven on earth, but something of the strength and beauty of that infinite order which comprehends all ages and all worlds. The life of Christ is our witness that the spiritual development of man may be carried so high, at length, that the common heart shall become sensitive to and aware of the life that pervades all things, and shall know itself enfolded by the Divine Presence, even as our bodies are held within the embrace of the invisible air.

I am persuaded that if we are thinking, as Saint Paul was, of the highest interests of our race and of the ways in which its largest good is to be wrought out, we must still say with him, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Of course this is not saying that one must believe on him after the fashion of the popular religion of our time, in order to reach heaven; or that other races to whom his name is unknown are eternally lost. It is saying, however, that, for the present at least, no man and no party of men will

be able to invent a basis, or a bond of union, to displace that single personality by which the Christian world is bound together. It means that the great currents of benevolence, philanthropy, and moral reform will, with us, continue to bear his name; that every good cause will in the end draw most of its recruits from the churches where his influence is one of the strongest of living forces; and that the source of all this power which his life still manifests, is not delusion, but the presence in him of a commanding truth, whose radiance not all the mists of superstition have been able to quench. No true friend of his Gospel will ask to have everything done formally and officially in his name. But no real gain will anywhere result from making war upon that name as if it were a symbol of slavery and error. It is, and will remain a symbol, dear to the hearts of millions, of the very highest thoughts and the holiest love they can conceive; and there is no greater work to be done on earth, at this time, than that of revealing to the common sight what deeps of wisdom and what heights of excellence are in that sacred life, lying as yet unrealized and unexplored.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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[No. 80]

THE BIBLE.

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

REPRINTED FROM

"ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS IN RELIGION."

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
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In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE BIBLE.

What is the Bible? and Where did it come from? "The Bible" means "The Book," and it is "The Book of Books." No other scriptures of man compare with it for wide, deep, and ever-growing influence. It is the highest work of its class, — that is, of the sacred writings of mankind; and these sacred writings are, among all other writings, the most important and influential.

Every commanding race, every vast civilization, has been directed and controlled by its sacred writings. The hundred and fifty millions of Hindoos have been ruled, during twenty-five centuries, by their Vedas and Puranas. Chinese civilization has taken its stamp from "The Kings" and the "Four Books." The brilliant career of the Persian empire was inspired throughout by the Zend-Avesta. The tribes of Arabia were gathered, moulded, banded, and wielded in a resistless tide of conquest by the Koran. The sacred books of the Buddhists have been the leaven of civilization among a third part of the human race during a vast period of time. If we judge them by their influence, these are the great books of the human race. But, for various reasons, the Bible stands above them all. The others are the books of particular races, — of the Hindoos only, or the Mongols, or the Persians, or the Chinese; but the Bible has a constituency composed of all the races of the world. The others belong to decaying, arrested, or dead civilizations; the Bible, to the

advancing and all-conquering races who stand for the highest civilization attained on this planet. The others are either narrow or shallow in some directions; the Bible is a fountain whose waters feed intellect, heart, life, promoting the highest worship, as well as the largest humanity. This supreme value of the Bible has been recognized by thinkers of all schools. Walter Scott expresses the orthodox idea in the lines which he puts in the mouth of the White Lady of Avenel: —

> "Within this awful volume lies
> The mystery of mysteries.
> Happiest they of human race
> To whom our God hath granted grace
> To read, to hear, to hope, to pray,
> To lift the latch and force the way;
> But better had he ne'er been born
> Who reads to doubt or reads to scorn."

Another writer, who is not usually supposed to reverence the Bible too much, Theodore Parker, thus speaks of it. I gladly quote his words to show that he is not that merely destructive radical he is often believed to be: "This collection of books has taken such a hold on the world as no other. The literature of Greece, which goes up like incense from that land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book from a nation alike despised in ancient and modern times. It is read of a Sabbath in all the ten thousand pulpits of our land. In all the temples of Christendom its voice is lifted up week by week. The sun never sets on its gleaming page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colors the talk of the street. . . . It blesses us when we are born, gives names to half Christendom, rejoices with us, has sympathy with our sorrowing, tempers our grief to

finer issues. . . . Now, for such effects there must be an adequate cause. That nothing comes of nothing is true all the world over. It is no light thing to hold with an electric chain a thousand hearts, though but an hour. What is it, then, to hold the Christian world, and that for centuries? . . . Some thousand famous writers come up in this century, to be forgotten in the next. But the silver cord of the Bible is not loosed, nor its golden bowl broken, as tens of centuries go by. . . . There must be in the Bible mind, heart, soul, wisdom, and religion. Were it otherwise, how could millions find it their lawgiver, friend, and prophet? Some of the greatest of human institutions seem built on the Bible; such things will not stand on heaps of chaff, but on mountains of rock." (Discourse of Religion, pp. 302–304.)

If, then, we ask, "What is the Bible?" the answer is, "The Word of God." But this answer takes two shapes, which I am now to consider.

One answer, and that the most common in the Protestant church, says: It is "the Word," by being inspired throughout by God, — in every book, every page, every chapter, every verse, every word. It is infallible all through. Every part is consistent with every other part, and with all truth. If it contradicts astronomy or geology, so much the worse for them. If it contradicts historic monuments and records, then they are false. If it seems to contradict itself, this is only in appearance. It is the Word of God throughout, from Genesis to Revelation; and "better had he ne'er been born who reads to doubt" a word of any part of it, from Genesis to Revelation. This is the theory of infallible verbal inspiration.

The other answer to the question, "How is the Bible the Word of God?" is that it is filled with the Spirit of God. As we read the Old Testament, we everywhere

feel the presence of Divine power and justice ruling the world. The world and its affairs are all guided and governed by God, who will reward good and punish evil. It is a revelation everywhere of Divine law. As we read the New Testament, we are in the presence of a heavenly Father of an infinite tenderness, who pours blessings on the good and the evil, and desires to save every child. The Old Testament is inspired by the sense of Divine law, the New Testament by the sense of Divine love.

But its unity, its sacredness, its power, is of the spirit, not the letter. There is no infallibility about its geology, astronomy, or history; but its spirit is everywhere one. This spirit is developed more and more from the earliest to the latest books. The Old Testament grows more spiritual in the Psalms and Prophets than in Kings and Chronicles. The New Testament comes to fulfil the Old, — not to contradict it, but to complete it. The summit is reached in the life and words of Jesus, which are full of the highest truth.

In order to discover which of these views is the true one, we must see where the Bible came from. Our Bible is the English Bible. But the English Bible is a translation, for the Bible was written originally in Hebrew and Greek. Therefore if the doctrine of verbal inspiration is true, not only must the authors have been miraculously preserved from error, but the translators also. Our present English Bible is a translation — called the Authorized Version — made by fifty-four scholars by the command of James the First. They were not left free to translate according to their conscience and knowledge, but were ordered to follow certain rules. They were not allowed to make a new translation, but only to correct an older one. They took the liberty of translating the same Hebrew or Greek word sometimes by one English word

and sometimes by another. And now we ask whether they were infallibly inspired always to choose the right word in their translation? No one pretends that they were; but if not, the whole theory of infallible verbal inspiration falls to the ground.

Take, for example, the Greek words, "krima" and "krisis," which are translated in our Bible sometimes "judgment," sometimes "condemnation," and sometimes "damnation." Our English Bible makes Paul say that he who eats the Lord's Supper unworthily "eats and drinks *damnation* to himself." But it does not make Jesus say, "For damnation I have come into the world;" but, "For judgment I have come into the world," and yet the word is the same. Our translation does not translate, "This is the damnation, that light has come into the world;" but, "This is the condemnation." Here too the word is the same. So the word "hades" is translated in one place "the grave," and in other places "hell." If, therefore, we are to consider our English Bible verbally inspired, then the translators must have been inspired to decide whether in such texts it is hell that is spoken of, or only the grave. But as no one believes this, it is certain that our English Bible, at any rate, cannot be verbally inspired.

How is it, then, with the Greek or Hebrew Bible from which they translate it? As the books of the New Testament were written in the first and second centuries, and as printing was not discovered till the middle of the fifteenth century, it is evident that these books were copied in writing by scribes during thirteen or fourteen hundred years. Were these copyists all infallibly inspired so as to make no mistakes? Certainly not; for then the manuscripts now extant would not differ from each other as they do. In the fifteen hundred manuscripts of the whole

or parts of the New Testament which have been compared together, more than a hundred thousand various readings have been found, — mostly unimportant, but some of great consequence. Now, unless some one is infallibly inspired to distinguish between these various readings, we cannot have a verbally inspired Bible. If you open your New Testament at 1 John v. 7, you will find the following verse, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." This passage is the only one in the New Testament in which the doctrine of the Trinity seems to be plainly taught. And this passage is wanting in *all* the Greek manuscripts except two modern ones, in all the ancient versions, even in the copies of the Vulgate before the tenth century, in all the Church Fathers, — even those who were discussing the Trinity, and who quoted the verses before it and after it, — and is now universally admitted to be no part of the Epistle of John. Yet it stands in all our English Bibles, and is read and quoted as if it were a part of the inspired Word.

But let us suppose that somehow we have certainly possessed ourselves of the original text of the inspired writers; there is still another question. Who collected the books of the Old and New Testament, and decided that these were the inspired writers? In other words, who fixed the canon? Who was infallibly authorized to say that these particular books, and no others, out of all Jewish and Christian literature, should be put together in the Bible? The answer is, No one. The Bible was not thus formed. It came together gradually, on the principle of the survival of the fittest. Books which were at first a part of the Bible dropped out of it. Others which were rejected by many at first have finally become established in the canon as a part of the sacred Scriptures.

Not long ago, in the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, a Russian scholar discovered an ancient manuscript of the New Testament, which proved to be the oldest known. It goes back to the fourth century; and one way by which its age is determined is that it contains, among the other books, the Epistle of Barnabas, which ceased to be a part of the New Testament after the fourth century. Barnabas was the companion of Paul, and is called a prophet in the New Testament, and is said to be a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. He was sent to Jerusalem with Paul to attend the first Christian council. He joined the Church at the very first, and showed his zeal by selling his land and giving the proceeds to his needy fellow Christians. He introduced Paul to the Church, went with him on his missionary journeys, and is called an apostle in the New Testament. Now, an epistle, believed to have been written by him, was for this reason put among the Scriptures of the New Covenant, and remained in them two or three hundred years. Then it dropped out; and if you wish to know why, read it, and you will see. Not because of any doubts entertained in those days of its authenticity, for it was repeatedly quoted by Clement and Origen as a genuine work of Barnabas; but it is full of tasteless allegories, it has no weight, no substance, and evidently it was left out of the New Testament because it was not fit to stay in. What books belong to the New Testament has not been settled even now. The Roman Catholic church puts into the Bible the Old Testament Apocrypha, which most Protestants reject. Criticism has not definitely settled in regard to two or three of the books of the New Testament whether they are genuine. How, then, can we pretend that every part of the present Bible is infallibly the Word of God?

Another objection to this doctrine of verbal inspiration

is that it repels many persons from Christianity, and is the cause of much infidelity. There are often honest and intelligent men who cannot receive the geology or astronomy of the Book of Genesis, or many of the miracles of the Bible. They are told that if they do not believe that Joshua stopped the sun in his course, and that the whale swallowed Jonah, they have no right to believe in Jesus Christ. So they are rejected from Christianity. One remarkable illustration of this is to be found in the French philosopher Rousseau, whose name has been identified with infidelity, when he was, in truth, the most religious man among the great thinkers of his own time and land. In his book on education, "Émile," he gives his creed in regard to Christ. He puts Christ far above all other teachers the world has seen, and is ready to accept him as his master in religion, because of his wonderful life and death. "Do not compare him with Socrates," he cries. "Socrates died like a philosopher; Jesus died like a God." As to his miracles, says Rousseau, "I can neither receive them as facts, nor can I reject them. I admit my ignorance concerning them. They may have been true, only I cannot say that I believe them. But I can believe in Christ on other grounds, because of his wonderful character and marvellous teaching. On these grounds I can be a Christian." But this was not considered sufficient by the Church, and he was banished from France because of this book and these statements. He went to Switzerland, and there, in a small town in Neufchâtel, found a little Protestant church which received him on his own grounds; and there he had a religious home, and partook with them of the Lord's Supper.

At the beginning of my ministry I had a church in Kentucky. There I found many persons who were reputed to be infidels, and thought themselves so, and whose influ-

ence was against Christianity, simply because they could not accept the verbal inspiration of the whole Bible. One man I knew, one of the best of men, upright and honorable, benevolent and kind, who was called an infidel. When I asked him about it, he said, "Yes, I have thought myself so, and for this reason, — when I was young, I heard a minister say, taking a Bible in his hand, 'Everything between these lids is the Word of God, and if you do not believe it you will be damned.' I said, 'If this is Christianity, I must be an infidel.' But now I have changed my mind. I do not think that Christianity requires me to believe every word in the Bible, and so I can gladly be a Christian."

Why, then, is this doctrine of the infallible verbal inspiration of the Bible still maintained? Not because the Scripture itself claims any such infallibility; it does not. It is indeed said that "all Scripture is given by inspiration," but not that this inspiration is infallible. Inspiration is one thing, infallibility another. The great poets, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, are called inspired, and truly, because they have an inward illumination which shows them forms of truth and beauty and goodness unseen by common men. But this inspiration does not preserve them from mistakes. It does not make them infallible. Take the four Gospels and compare them with each other. One spirit, one life, pervades them all; it is the life of Christ. But they frequently contradict each other in details. If you demand verbal and minute accuracy, their whole story falls to the ground, and we lose our Master. They differ from each other openly and frankly all the way through as regards outward incidents. But as to the substance of the story, they are one. They differ as to the details of Christ's resurrection, but that he really rose from the dead they are fully agreed. If it is

necessary, in order to believe Christianity, to have verbal accuracy in the Scriptures, one cannot believe Christianity at all: for the Scriptures cannot be verbally accurate when they differ even in unimportant minutiæ. But it is not necessary. What we need is to be certain as to the main facts of Christ's life, teaching, and character. And we can be certain of these, just as we are certain of the main facts in the life and character of Alexander the Great, Dr. Franklin, Julius Cæsar, General Washington. No one pretends that those writers from whom we derive our information concerning such persons were infallibly inspired; yet we are at least as sure of the main facts of their lives and character as we are of the main facts of the life of Abraham, Samuel, or David. We are *more* sure that Julius Cæsar crossed the Rubicon on his way to Rome, and that Dr. Franklin was in London before the Revolution, than that Jesus went to Jerusalem at the beginning of his ministry; for all writers are agreed as to the one, and the four Evangelists are not agreed as to the other.

Many arguments have been brought to prove the theory of verbal inspiration, some of them very ingenious. But the difficulty with them all is that they merely aim at showing that the Bible *ought* to be verbally inspired, not that it is so. The fact remains that it is *not* so inspired, since it is in some places opposed to science, in others to history, and in others to itself. One curious fact shows that this doctrine is supported by the fear that, if a single verse of the Bible is admitted to be unsound, the authority of the whole will be gone. Scholars of all denominations admit that there are mistranslations and interpolations in our Bible which ought not to be there. Some years ago the Committee on Versions of the American Bible Society, containing eminent scholars, all of Orthodox denomina-

tions, prepared an amended edition of the English version. They did not make a new translation, nor amend the errors of the old one, nor even improve the text where it is admitted to be faulty. They only corrected some palpable misprints, and altered the headings of the chapters where these are incomplete or false, or where they are in reality comments on the Scripture. This amended version, indorsed by the secretaries, and adopted by the Board of Managers, was printed and circulated by them during seven years, and was then suppressed. This was done in consequence of a clamor, raised not merely by the ignorant, but in which even Reviews, Ecclesiastical Bodies, and Auxiliary Societies did not hesitate to join. I asked one of the gentlemen, who was a member of the committee, why this was done; and he said that it was owing to the fear that, if we once began to make corrections in the Bible, the people might lose their faith in it altogether.

It is said, "Unless we believe the Scriptures infallibly true, there can be no *authority;* and we need some *authority* to rest upon, otherwise all will become uncertain, and then there will be no firm convictions about anything." I admit that we want firm religious convictions. I go further; I say we need to *know* spiritual things just as we know natural things. But I contend that the belief in a verbal inspiration does not give us that knowledge, but rather hinders it. I also maintain that we need to trust in the authority of Jesus. It is an immense help to have confidence in him as the way, the truth, and the life. But to trust in the *authority* of a teacher is not knowledge; it is only the door to knowledge. You send your child to school, and it is right that he should trust in the teacher's authority, and take what is taught on that authority; but if it ends there, he has not learned anything. Until he

has made his teacher's instruction a harmonious part of his *own* knowledge, he does not know.

Authority is a door by which we enter the vast temple of truth. It is a guide who leads us through the wilderness to the Promised Land. But there its work ends. It does not give us knowledge, only the access to knowledge. The true authority of the Scripture is this, that it is a book made sacred by the love and respect of many generations, — a book which has brought comfort and joy to thousands and tens of thousands of hearts, which has been the means of converting sinners and of edifying saints. Hence we ought to approach it with trust, expectation, confidence, and read it to find what it has to teach us, seeking for the spirit of life and truth which is in it. But to have this faith in the Bible as full of truth, it is not necessary to believe in its perfect accuracy in every respect, nor that it has been preserved by a miracle from all error. No one believes that Humboldt was infallibly inspired; but what authority his words carry! No one believes that La Place was infallibly inspired to write the "Mécanique Céleste." It has been said that in America not five men can understand it; yet his views of the universe are accepted by all. No one believes the "Nautical Almanac" an inspired book; but it is such an authority that thousands of vessels trust themselves to its calculations, and thousands of lives and millions of property are confided to its accuracy.

The true inspiration of the Bible is not of the letter, but of the spirit. Until we have caught that spirit, all the dogmas of its inspiration avail nothing. When we have that, we do not need them. The spirit of the Bible is one all through. From Genesis to Revelation there is a sense of the power of God. It all brings us near to him. Everything is looked at as if he were near by. The

Book of Genesis teaches that God is the creator of all things. The Persians said that the stars and planets were gods; Genesis says, "God made them all." The Egyptians said that plants and animals were gods; Genesis says, "God said, Let the earth bring forth herbs and animals." It does not teach geology, but monotheism.

Pass on to the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. What inspiration is there in these? you ask. Of the letter, none; but there is the spirit of trust in a providence, near by, guiding human feet evermore. Come down to David. He was a fierce soldier, a wild, passionate man, with many faults; but amid them all there was a love of right and goodness, there was a profound sorrow for his sins, and a perfect trust in God. When David, tending his sheep on the hillsides of Judæa, sang his song of trust, and said, "The Lord is my shepherd," the Divine inspiration taught him a strain which will echo through all time.

Then turn to the prophets. They were stern and solemn figures, awful and venerable shapes, "going in the heat and bitterness of their spirit." But they were firmly convinced of the ever-present Divine power. They stood like a rock, hoping against hope. They cry out to a backsliding people, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found." "It is he who hath measured the waters with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure." This is the inspiration of the Old Testament. It is Divine power around us all, and Divine law above us all, and Divine providence guiding us all.

In the New Testament there comes another sense of sunny piety, a happy atmosphere of heavenly love. Listen to Jesus: "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father; and ye are of more value than many sparrows."

"Be ye children of your Father in heaven, who causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good; and sends his rain on the just and the unjust."

"Consider the lilies how they grow. . . . If God so clothe the grass of the field, how much more will he clothe you."

"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me"—that is, who accepts my truth and trusts in my word—"shall never die." He does not die. Death is nothing to him. He passes on and up.

"Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

"What man among you being a father, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? How much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy spirit to those that ask him."

Is a theory of plenary inspiration necessary to enable us to believe the Sermon on the Mount, or to utter the Lord's Prayer? Are not such sayings their own authority? And what did Paul mean when he said, "God has made us able ministers of the New Testament, *not of the letter, but of the spirit;* for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"? What did he mean but exactly what I have been contending for here? Do I need any theory of verbal inspiration to be satisfied that he was filled by a Divine spirit when he said, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, . . . can separate me from the love of God in Jesus Christ"?

Peter and James and John are not repetitions of Paul; they all speak in their own language, but one spirit runs through them all. When John says, "He that loveth dwelleth in God;" when James says, "Pure religion is to visit the fatherless, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world," they said the same thing which Paul said in declaring that "Love is the fulfilling of the Law,"

and that Love is greater even than Faith or Hope. And all agree with the great words of Christ, when he taught that the chief commandment is to love God and love man.

The spirit of the Bible is one; there is no contradiction, no opposition there. But when Paul says, "The letter killeth," he utters a solemn warning; for care for the letter has always brought a chill of death to the soul.

It is not, then, because we wish to have less respect felt for the Bible that we oppose this theory of the letter, but because we wish more. If this whole theory were dropped, we should, as I am convinced, enter far more into the spirit of the Bible. The Bible would then no more be regarded merely as a master, but rather as a friend. Multitudes now repelled would be attracted toward it, and the Bible might say to Christian believers, as Jesus said, "I call you not servants," blindly obedient to an unintelligible command; "but I call you friends," intelligently obeying what you see to be right, intelligently accepting what you see to be true, and able to comprehend what is the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of God.

The power of the Bible is not in its letter, but its spirit. That spirit needs no support from dogmas or theories of a supposed infallibility. The Bible may be proved full of errors as regards science, often wrong in its chronology and history. Its saints may be very imperfect characters, its prophets mistaken in their predictions, its apostles men of like passions with ourselves, and sometimes going astray. It may be true of them, as they said of themselves, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." But what is the chaff to the wheat? The power of the Bible is that it brings God to man, and lifts man to God; that it shows a providence reaching through all

history, and whose everlasting arms are below all things, — a Father, whose love comes down into the heart of every child, who cares for us all, and is the Saviour of all. The Holy Spirit which pervades this book is *The Comforter*. It brings us comfort in our sorrows, light in our darkness, hope in our despair. When all the scaffoldings which surround the Bible are taken away, by which men have tried to prop it up, the world will begin truly to recognize its real glory. Kingdoms fall, institutions perish, civilizations change, human doctrines disappear; but the imperishable truths which pervade and sanctify the Bible shall bear it up above the flood of change and the deluge of years. It will forever remain —

> "A sacred ark, which from the deeps
> Garners the life for worlds to be,
> And with its precious burden sweeps
> Adown dark time's destroying sea."

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